

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



100 200

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Homes of Famous Americans

VOLUME II NOW IN PREPARATION

To Include the Homes of

George Mason, Edgar Allan Poe, Israel Putnam, Dorothy Quincy, John Marshall, Aaron Burr, Noah Webster, John Greenleaf Whittier, Theodore Roosevelt, Walt Whitman, John C. Calhoun, Alexander Hamilton, John Burroughs, Thomas Paine, Patrick Henry, Louisa M. Alcott, William McKinley, Sir William Johnson, William Henry Harrison, James Madison, James Whitcomb Riley, Joel Chandler Harris, John Brown, Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

THE MEREDITH PUBLICATIONS

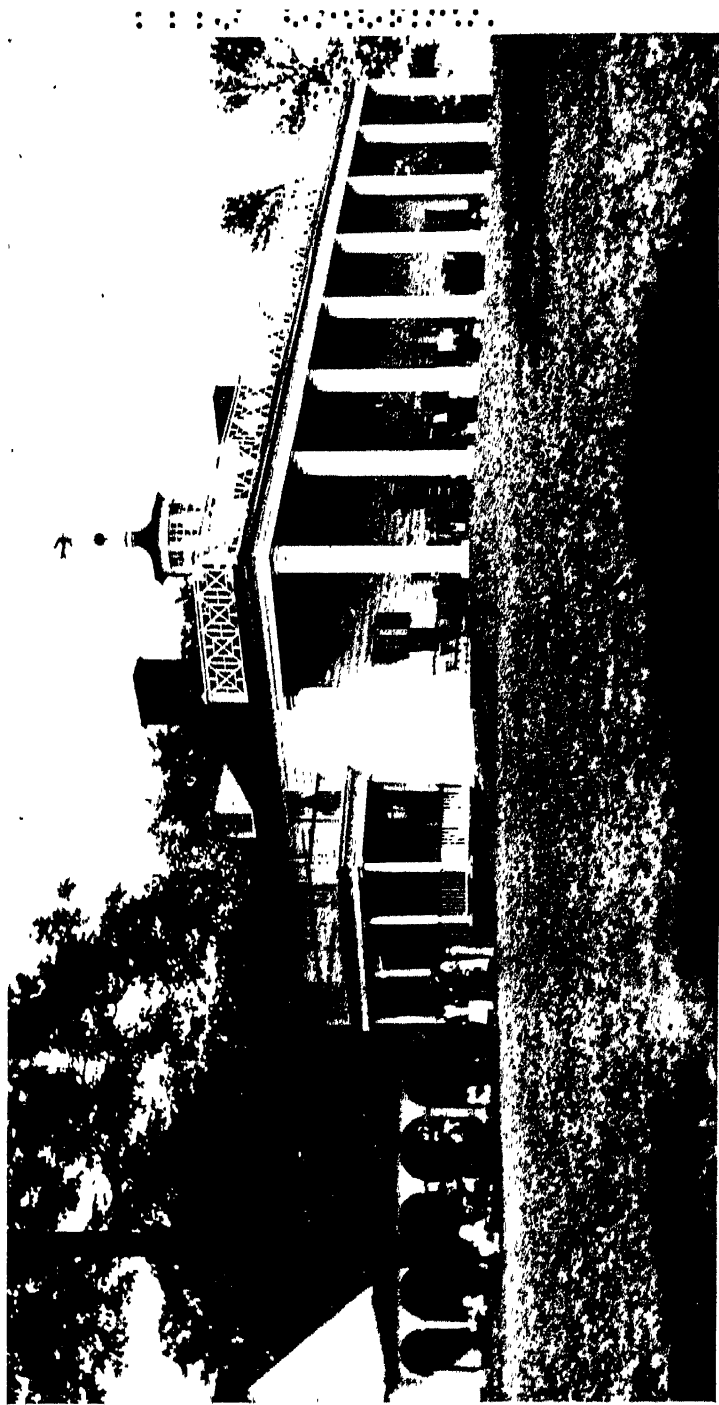


PLATE I. Mount Vernon, the home of Washington.
"Its grandeur lies in its magnificent simplicity."

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

BY

CHESLA C. SHERLOCK

EDITOR "BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS"

VOLUME I

MEREDITH PUBLICATIONS

DES MOINES, IOWA

COPYRIGHTED 1926
BY CHESLA C. SHERLOCK

~~Mount Pleasant Press~~
J. Horace McFarland Company
Harrisburg, Pa.

To Lucile

**WHO HAS MADE MY HOME THE
MIRROR OF MY DREAMS**

FOREWORD

FOR many years, in season and out, I have lived intimately with these men and women who have done much to make America great. I have visited their homes and rummaged long hours in the human intimacy of their lives. I have seen them in their family circles, in the heat and passions of their world of strife and action, in the autumn of their age, and, at last, have stood beside their final resting-places. I stand in debt, as we all do, to every one of them!

These sketches do not attempt to approximate the fullness of their lives—such would be impossible. They do not even attempt to give with photographic faithfulness every detail of their homes—such would obscure the rich suggestiveness of this forest of Tall Timbers by exposing too many *trees!*

What I have sought to do has been to focus their lives against the background of the homes they loved so well, and in this sympathetic setting point out the true reasons for their successes and failures. I have not been awed by reputations. Like Paine, I am willing to “kill the king, but save the man!”

Each heart represented herein touches at some point of the compass of human experience our own longings and aspirations. The projections of our own dreams are but the reputations we give to our heroes. In them,

as we come to know them, we see ourselves at our best or worst. They were human and on that thought each sketch is forged.

Let these sketches strike flint with you; let them bring you a little more understanding and tolerance for the strength and weakness of human nature; let them bring a higher appreciation for the influence of the atmosphere of *home* upon our lives—and I shall be richly repaid for the toil they have cost me!

CHESLA C. SHERLOCK

Des Moines, Iowa
February, 1926

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Mount Vernon, the Home of George Washington.	1
II. The Hermitage, the Home of Andrew Jackson.	13
III. The Home of Abraham Lincoln.	29
IV. Beauvoir, the Home of Jefferson Davis.	41
V. The Home of Betsy Ross.	55
VI. Hardscrabble, the Cabin Home of General Grant.	67
VII. The Home of General Taylor.	79
VIII. Mount Pleasant, the Home of Benedict Arnold.	89
IX. Eliza House at Ripley, Ohio.	105
X. The Home of Emerson.	115
XI. Arlington, the Home of Robert E. Lee.	127
XII. Carlyle House at Alexandria.	141
XIII. Craigie House, the Home of Henry W. Longfellow.	153
XIV. "My Old Kentucky Home."	167
XV. Paul Revere's Home.	181
XVI. Ashland, the Home of Henry Clay.	193
XVII. Walden, the Rendezvous of Thoreau.	205
XVIII. Monticello, the Home of Thomas Jefferson.	217
XIX. Elmwood, the Home of James Russell Lowell.	233
XX. William Penn's House.	245
XXI. Wayside, the Home of Nathaniel Hawthorne.	257
XXII. Waynesborough, the Home of "Mad Anthony" Wayne.	271
XXIII. The Home of John Alden.	287
XXIV. "Home, Sweet Home."	301

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	FACING PAGE
I. Mount Vernon, the home of Washington.	<i>Frontispiece</i> .
II. The Hermitage mansion house as seen through the trees. . .	17
III. "Lincoln's house is rather large and ungainly for the size of the lot upon which it is built."	32
IV. "Beauvoir is rightly named. One can sit on the wide veranda and watch the gleam of sunlight upon the gentle waves of the Gulf of Mexico."	53
V. "The Birthplace of Old Glory."	60
VI. "Hardscrabble," the cabin home of General Grant, from the rear and side.	73
VII. The home of General Zachary Taylor, near Louisville, Kentucky.	85
VIII. Mount Pleasant, the home of Benedict Arnold. The group of buildings from rear entrance; servant quarters and the kitchen were located in the two smaller buildings.	92
IX. Eliza House, where Harriet Beecher Stowe met the negress, "Eliza."	109
X. Emerson's home at Concord. Here he spent the best years of his life.	121
XI. Arlington, the home of Robert E. Lee. "One can see the Doric columns of the mansion house from all parts of the historic plains of Washington."	129
XII. Carlyle House, called the birthplace of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.	144
XIII. Craigie House, the home of Henry W. Longfellow at Cam- bridge, Massachusetts.	161
XIV. "My Old Kentucky Home," near Bardstown, Kentucky, where Foster wrote his masterpiece.	176

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE	FACING PAGE
XV. Paul Revere's Home, Boston.	185
XVI. Ashland, the home of Henry Clay, at Lexington, Kentucky.	197
XVII. Walden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts, the rendezvous of Thoreau.	209
XVIII. Front view of Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, at Charlottesville, Virginia.	224
XIX. Elmwood, the home of James Russell Lowell, at Cambridge, Massachusetts.	237
XX. William Penn house in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.	249
XXI. Wayside, Hawthorne's Concord home.	261
XXII. Waynesborough, home of General Anthony Wayne.	277
XXIII. The home of John and Priscilla Alden at Duxbury, Mas- sachusetts.	289
XXIV. "Home, Sweet Home," the boyhood home of John Howard Payne, at East Hampton, Long Island.	304

CHAPTER I

MOUNT VERNON, THE HOME OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON

MOUNT VERNON

I SUPPOSE I should have gone to Mt. Vernon by boat—that would have been more in keeping with the spirit of today—to have gone in a great crowd, excursion-bent—but I was thinking of other days, so far back in the dim past that they seemed almost like dream days. And so I went down the Alexandria road; past that old metropolis, down King's Highway to Mount Vernon.

I should have liked a horse and to have been astride; to have jogged down the turnpike leisurely, with plenty of time to think. For one must be in a proper frame of mind, there must be time to recall historic facts, to put one's self back into the years—if all that one sees and feels is to be worthy of the occasion. Going down the Alexandria road from Washington, a hundred and fifty years seemed to roll back. One was living in Washington's day, seeing sights that his eyes had seen, walking the very soil he had walked many a time. One could almost reach out the finger and touch him. It all seemed very real and very true.

We passed an old tavern by the turnpike, with a hitching-post in front. I thought the horses tied there might belong to a Lee, a Carlyle, a Washington! The two or three dim figures standing on the porchway seemed to have cocked hats, peach-colored waistcoats, and thin scabbards pointing out of them.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

At Alexandria, one enters the times of Washington indeed. Here *you are living with Washington* a full hundred and fifty years ago, even before the Revolution. You pass into the entrance of Christ Church, up the steps he trod, down the aisle he walked, to the pew he occupied. You look at the quaint pulpit he saw, the stained glass windows his eyes rested upon. It is the greatest hour of your life!

You visit Carlyle House, where dwelt Colonel Carlyle. It was here that Braddock made his headquarters before his memorable and disastrous campaign. They point out the room where the haughty Briton gave Washington his first commission as a Colonel of colonial troops. And from the steps of the same fine old mansion, Washington issued his last military command in the final days of his military service. You walk the ancient streets, deeply stirred at the quaint old buildings, the moss-covered brick walks. Out of every shadow, out of every shuttered window, peers the spirit of the sturdy old colonial days.

Down King's Highway from Alexandria, the pulse quickens. Yonder are the heights where Braddock's army encamped while the General was gathering his stores and planning the campaign that cost his life, and gave us Washington. The road winds and turns over and around the Virginia hills; it dips into the valleys and skirts pine woods. Glimpses are caught of old mansions almost overrun by the young forests springing up. One considers the soil, mostly sand and gravel

MOUNT VERNON

now, and marvels that it could have produced the wealth with which the countryside was once blessed.

Yonder is the creek where Washington's mill was located; we pass the site of more ancient defenses against the Indians; then suddenly, out of the dust in front there pours back upon us a seething mass of torn and tangled men, in wild flight, bloody and dust-covered, driven in rout by Fear. Yes, it was up this road that the Federal Army was hurled in utter confusion after the first Bull Run! And up the Potomac, just over the ridge, swept the British in 1814, when they destroyed most of Washington, D. C. Why they left Mt. Vernon is a mystery.

At last we are at Mt. Vernon. That is, at the rear entrance. The house and grounds are some distance up the knoll, hidden by trees and ivy-covered wall. We pass through the tollgate and walk up the old drive. And it is fitting and proper that we should enter afoot (no vehicles are allowed inside the grounds). We should also go uncovered; indeed, the heart is, for we are in the presence of one of the world's great souls.

We pass through the simple gateway entrance, and pause and look back. We seem to see Washington riding up the drive, back from Alexandria on some business. The old fence, the plain gate posts, are still there intact, as in his day. Trees line the parkway and shade the drive. The drive circles the walled garden to the right and we suddenly come in full view of the mansion, two good city blocks away. The first thing

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

that strikes the eye of the garden-lover is the generous open spaces about Mt. Vernon. Not a leaf or bush obscures the full view of the house. The drive circles in, turns around a patch of lawn, in the center of which stands Washington's sun-dial, and we are at the back door of the home where Washington was master for full forty years. Rather we should say that there are three back doors, for Mt. Vernon is a house of straight halls, three running through the house, dividing the rooms, from front to back. The doorway at the left, as we enter from the rear, is the entrance to the famous Banquet Hall. The high ceiling is true to our expectations, but the rather painfully small fireplace, with its marble mantel, seems out of proportion to the size of the room. And the Banquet Hall itself is a disappointment in that it is much smaller than we had expected. We suddenly come down to earth. We had imagined that hundreds of gay ladies and courtly gentlemen had been present at the famous Mt. Vernon social hours; now we realize that no Mt. Vernon party probably exceeded twenty-five guests, certainly not if their comfort was considered. A few relics are about in cases, on the mantelpiece, and table. There is little to impress one inside Mt. Vernon—it is too much like a museum, and too many people tramping and milling around; one can't get a perspective of it, it is too ordinary, as compared with the majesty of the exterior. We pass out the front door, onto the flagged veranda overlooking the Potomac. Our heart tugs. This was

MOUNT VERNON

Washington's favorite spot. Here he entertained his visitors, when the weather permitted. Here Lafayette came to bid good-bye to his chief. And here most of the world's really great have paused in homage to the man. These flagstones which pave the floor were imported from England by Lawrence Washington, the builder of Mt. Vernon. The wonder is that Virginia's native rock did not satisfy. But this was typical of the times; all eyes were turned to England, everything came from England. The colonies were capable of producing only raw materials and advancing impossible political theories.

The porch roof has eight columns; yet a famous artist has painted a picture in which he placed nine! We examine the walls of the house proper. They seem to be of stone, painted white, as the White House. We rap on them with our knuckles and discover that they are wood. Then a caretaker tells us that they are indeed of wood, cut in imitation of stone. We had thought, and many others have thought, that Mt. Vernon was of clapboard construction.

Again we enter the house, the middle hallway. The main stairway is beginning to tremble under the weight of the millions of curious feet which have mounted it. To the right we glance into the music-room, filled with musical instruments, chairs, and furniture—all of Washington's day. Even the rug on the floor was there when he dwelt at Mt. Vernon. We see the harpsichord, which he bought in England as a present for his

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

adopted daughter, and which cost him a thousand dollars to deliver at Mt. Vernon. A flute is seen, a few faded chairs.

Across the hall in the rear is the family dining-room. We suddenly remember there is no kitchen in Mt. Vernon proper. All the cooking was done in a separate building at the rear and carried into the great house. We come out upon the steps at the rear again and gaze back into the Virginia landscape, thrilled anew. Indeed, here was the real heart of Mt. Vernon, the outdoors!

Washington's library commanded a view of the walk to the river landing, also the driveway and wide expanse to the rear. Here are collected his surveying instruments, his desk, his chairs, several of his swords, and his books. His bookcase is built-in and painted or enameled in white. It mounts to the ceiling and contains no more books than many an average home has. I was interested in the kinds of books Washington read. I found that, roughly speaking, two-thirds of them were on agricultural subjects, the remainder being about evenly divided between English history and naval stories and diaries. It will be recalled that Washington's ambition as a young man was to go to sea, to become a naval officer. His mother's tears actually halted him at the boat-landing one morning, and changed the course of history.

Martha Washington's sewing-room, or sitting-room, adjoined the library but overlooked the porch and

MOUNT VERNON

river. A stairway leads up to her bed-chamber. The upper rooms at Mt. Vernon give one a feeling of being cramped for ceiling-room, perhaps because the lower rooms are high-ceilinged. In fact, the windows are right under the roof of the porch.

In Washington's bed-chamber we see the very bed upon which he died, and, in Martha Washington's room, the bed where she died three years later. The furniture is intact, and expressive of the best fashion of the day. It has, with the exception of the General's great bed, the ostentation and affectation of the aristocratic tendencies of the times. Somehow, the furniture, the wall decorations, all seem out of tune with the grandeur of Mt. Vernon as a whole.

Outside the mansion there are numerous other buildings arranged in regular files, to the rear and flanking the mansion. On the right, at the rear, we have the gardener's house, the spinning-house, the blacksmith's house, the icehouse, and the greenhouse. To the left is found the kitchen, the butler's house, and four or five other houses, ending in the stable, which was built in 1742 of brick imported from England.

The buildings might be described as being placed in a mighty arch design, with the mansion house the keystone. Everything else is subordinated to it; it is the jewel pushed forth amidst this wonderful setting. The graceful lawn sweeps away from it in every direction, unbroken by shrubbery or planting, only the fringe of majestic trees, most of them elms. The lawn

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

sweeps sharply down toward the river from the very edge of the flagstone pavement under the great porch roof; if anyone has imagined that the lawn is level at Mt. Vernon, he is due to be surprised.

The private deer-park of General Washington separates the lawn from the river bank. The boat-landing is perhaps half a mile farther downstream. The old tomb of Washington is half-way down the bank toward this landing, and fronts out on the river. It was here that Lafayette came in 1824, and wept at the sight of it. The new tomb, back some distance from the river, and out of sight of the main grounds, was built according to directions found in Washington's will. The remains were placed there about 1832. There George and Martha Washington sleep side by side in their Vermont marble caskets.

How can one describe his feelings when he comes to Mt. Vernon? That he is impressed, tremendously impressed, goes without saying. Then, what is it that prints into his mind impressions never to be forgotten? Is it the weight of the man in history; is it his great and lasting service to country; is it his upright and spotless character as a man; is it his absolute integrity and strength of purpose? We grant all these, but they do not suffice.

Washington came into possession of Mt. Vernon in 1759 through the death of his brother, Lawrence, at the age of twenty-seven years. Mt. Vernon was the work of his aristocratic brother; it was just as magnificent,

MOUNT VERNON

as large, as pretentious as he could make it. But the materials with which to work were limited and the builder had, forsooth, to draw upon the native hills and forests even against his will. Just as much as he could import, he shipped in. Whether intention or Fate had their way is immaterial, for Mt. Vernon emerged, when completed, a magnificent estate and magnificent because of its very simplicity.

Young George Washington came to Mt. Vernon early enough in life to be influenced by its atmosphere. He had been a surveyor, wilderness scout, a typical frontier lad. Now the lofty simplicity, even grandeur, of his estate sobered him. He became imbued with a deep sense of duty and obligation to discharge his trust well, and to serve his fellowmen. He cared little for the pomp and display, the affectation, the pride and selfishness of those of his "set." We find him writing "rules of conduct" in which he protested these petty faults of character; we find him arguing against duelling and refraining from it himself; we find him leaving Mt. Vernon no less than three times to serve his country as a volunteer, when he might have remained at home to manage his 5,000-acre estate.

Mt. Vernon was the pride of his life—the pride in the sense that it was his task in life to see that the great estate was economically and properly managed. He longed to return to it; he was offered a third term as President and could have had it, but he could not resist the lure of his home. When war threatened with

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

France, he reluctantly agreed to take the field again, but his heart was heavy within him. This we now know.

Washington was the richest man of his time. No man had a bigger estate so well developed; no man had the mansion Mt. Vernon was.

Lofty and noble and inspiring as it is, Washington rose to even greater heights, for he expressed in human character what it expresses in stone and wood and glass. Its grandeur lies in its magnificent simplicity, and in this it stands as a perfect mirror of the man who lived in its atmosphere for forty years.

CHAPTER II
THE HERMITAGE, THE HOME OF
ANDREW JACKSON

THE HERMITAGE

AT NASHVILLE, I was amazed to discover that the only way one can reach The Hermitage, the home of Andrew Jackson, is by taxi. There is no trolley service, no train. You are simply at the mercy of the taxi barons and you pay their price, or else you don't go. The Hermitage is some fourteen miles out into the country.

However, the ride out was delightful. It was a hazy, sunny day, this Armistice Day when I made the pilgrimage. Nashville is flanked and surrounded by a pretty ridge of hills, and the road to The Hermitage is along one of these ridges for a considerable distance. You pass old stone fences made from field-stones, which remind you of New England.

Old mansions flank the pike, set back in their protecting trees. They signify a well-ordered life in the community, for decay has not yet touched its blighting finger to this fertile countryside. You pass fields of ripe corn as fine as anything ever seen in the corn-belt; there are cattle in the fields, and hogs and horses.

Particularly you notice the stone, which is a characteristic of the southern half of Tennessee. It is in the fields; it is underneath the hills; it lines the pikes which criss-cross this country in every direction.

Then all at once the stone runs out. You notice that the farm land is richer, more fertile. And you are at the

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

edge of The Hermitage farm! The mansion house is seen through the trees a quarter of a mile from the corner. And you marvel in the sudden realization that grips you. Andrew Jackson certainly knew good land when he saw it. Beyond a doubt he picked the best and the most fertile land in all the fourteen miles to Nashville. We can imagine him as a young lawyer somewhere between 1795 and 1804 riding out from Nashville astride his horse studying this "wild land" in search of his future estate. And we notice that he kept going until he found fields without their stone litter.

It was in 1804 that Andrew Jackson built the original Hermitage, a modest log-cabin. He had come to Nashville from the Carolinas in 1795, a young lawyer with all his possessions in his saddle-bags, just as Abraham Lincoln, almost thirty years later, arrived in Springfield, Illinois.

He was successively lawyer, judge, and merchant. Finally, in 1804, we find him resigning from the bench, closing out his mercantile ventures, and going out to his "wild land" to begin life anew as a planter. Jackson had one terrible dislike, and that was to be in debt. His mercantile ventures involved him in obligations which his restless nature did not covet; at last he put into force a maxim which was always uppermost in his thoughts, "When in debt, sell off everything you have and make a fresh start." He sold 25,000 acres of his wild lands, paid his obligations, left the bench, and went out into the country—to live in a log-cabin and begin anew.



PLATE II. The Hermitage mansion house as seen through the trees.

THE HERMITAGE

But the comparative inactivity of the planter's life did not long absorb his complete attention. His political following secured for him the second most important position in the state government—that of commander-in-chief of the state militia with the rank of Major-General. The yearly salary amounted to the magnificent sum of \$600, whereas the governor of the state only drew \$750 per annum!

It is not possible in a discussion of this kind to review the tempestuous career of this stormy man. He was seldom quiet, seldom at peace. His duels are known to all; how he developed a feud with Thomas H. Benton and his brother, which was not altogether Jackson's fault but which he prosecuted with all the deadly earnestness he could command; how he fought and killed, by a stratagem, Major Wilkinson because of some uncomplimentary remarks which the latter made concerning Mrs. Jackson; how he horse-whipped others; how he went off to fight the Creek Indians *only three weeks* after Benton had nearly killed him, and when he was so weak from loss of blood that he fainted in getting out of bed; how he spent something like eighteen months in the field fighting the Indians and the British without medical attention, with a poorly equipped army, daily contending with mutiny in his own ranks, suffering such physical anguish from his duel-wounded shoulders that he could not bear the weight of shoulder-straps on them; suffering from dysentery to such an extent that he had to be strapped

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

over bent saplings with his arms hanging limp from the shoulders; emaciated from the ravages of these ailments and worries, and rapidly developing tuberculosis on top of all of them.

"It is my punishment," he said, "that I should have wasted my strength in a private quarrel at a time when my country was so sorely in need of it." And he carried firmly on through it all.

Is it any wonder that this slender six-footer should have been called "Old Hickory"? You could bend him in the heat and anguish of conflict, but you could not break him.

The Hermitage is a wonderful place, a haven of refuge, where this restless man retired to enjoy his peace, his trees, and the wife whom he idolized, in the brief intervals between his public service. Capable of strong and uncontrolled passions, he was also capable of the strongest quality of love. His wife, Rachel, he adored. She was the finest thought in his life; his love for her, his unending devotion to her, is one of the sweetest strains in his character. She died suddenly on the eve of the day they had set for their departure to Washington for his first inauguration. It was a great blow to Jackson from which he never recovered. Over her tomb in the garden at The Hermitage, he put these words: "Here lie the remains of Mrs. Rachel Jackson, wife of President Jackson, who died the 22d of December, 1828. Age 61 years. Her face was fair, her person pleasing, her temper amiable, her heart kind;

THE HERMITAGE

she delighted in relieving the wants of her fellow creatures, and cultivated that divine pleasure by the most liberal and unpretending methods; to the poor she was a benefactor; to the rich an example; to the wretched a comforter; to the prosperous an ornament; her piety went hand in hand with her benevolence, and she thanked her Creator for being permitted to do good. A being so gentle and so virtuous, slander might wound but could not dishonor. Even Death, when he bore her from the arms of her husband, could but transport her to the bosom of her God."

Jackson was living in the log-cabin when he won the battle of New Orleans, a victory for which he will be remembered in military history as long as it endures. Indeed, when he came back the "conquering hero" it was to this log-cabin, and he continued to reside there until 1819. It was in this cabin that he entertained Aaron Burr when the latter was on his way west to found a new empire.

In 1819, the new Hermitage was erected. It is built in the adopted colonial style, but of brick, hand-made on the place by Jackson's slaves. The exterior has none of the magnificence found in Mt. Vernon. While it is large and imposing, it is almost severe in its lines, the only ornamentation being the columns at front and rear.

It is in the interior that one finds abundant evidence of the love Jackson had for the fine things of life, reversing exactly what we found to be true at Mt. Vernon. The magnificence, the luxury of the interior

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

decoration and furnishings is almost boundless. We find oak floors highly polished, not unlike those so common today. The furniture is of mahogany; there are eight full mahogany poster beds at The Hermitage.

The rooms of The Hermitage are large and spacious. There are eleven in the house, in addition to pantry, storeroom, kitchen, and cellar. There are also a smoke-house and other outhouses. Any one of these rooms will almost match in size the original log-cabin. The Hermitage, built in 1819, was destroyed by fire in 1834 and rebuilt in the original walls the following year; this was during Jackson's service as President.

The hall is large and commodious. It is decorated with pictorial wallpaper, representing the travels of Telemachus in search of Ulysses. It was ordered from Paris and shipped by way of New Orleans up the Mississippi and Cumberland rivers. We see Jackson's hat-rack and umbrella-stand. On the walls are two or three portraits of the General and Mrs. Jackson. Cases along the walls hold many curios of historical interest. In one we see the wax candles which were found in Lord Cornwallis' tent after the surrender at Yorktown. These relics of a great victory were highly prized by Jackson and doubtless have the greatest interest and sentimental value of any in the room.

To the rear is the stairway with the original stair-carpet on it as placed there when the mansion was rebuilt in 1835. This is now roped off and visitors are not permitted to use it in order to save it for posterity.

THE HERMITAGE

A smaller stairway at the end of an adjoining hallway is used to usher the visitor to the upper rooms. Under the stairway and to one side is the back door which leads to the back yard and the old kitchen and smoke-house. This hallway is typically colonial and is not unlike those found in most old mansions, except for the fact that the house is probably greater in length. The hall is, therefore, longer than the one at Mt. Vernon and Federal Hill.

The rooms on the left of the hall as you enter the front door are Jackson's parlors, which are two in number. Here one finds the first hint of the richness of furnishings and hangings so characteristic of the mansion, and so unlike those found in most old shrines. The great crystal chandeliers are more than gorgeous—they are immense. They hang so near the floor that one cannot walk beneath them without bending. They were evidently hung low purposely for fear one might overlook them; there seems to be a suspicion that they must be forced to dominate the rooms, even at the comfort and convenience of the guests!

Small imagination is required to picture them as they are all lighted and begin to sparkle and glow with that brilliance deemed so necessary at social functions a century ago. It seems like a bit of color imported from some Old-World palace, so strangely out of place is it with our conception of this great champion of the rude frontier people. We rub our eyes and look about. The rich, heavy rugs, the scrolled and golden chairs with

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

their rich and colorful designs, the hangings at the windows—all contribute to the marked atmosphere of aristocracy. In fact, there seems to be something of an effort here to “put up a front,” to impress one with the importance of the place. It seems so unfitting for the preconceived picture we had of the real character of the man. To have found this at Mt. Vernon might not have surprised us so much—certainly it would not have surprised us at Monticello.

Opposite the rear parlor, a small hall runs at right angles to the main hall. This little hall led to the General's bedrooms, a smaller room used during his lifetime as a nursery for his grandchildren, and to his office. The nursery has been converted into a museum where the visitor may spend many hours viewing papers, relics, and curios associated with the man and members of his family.

One of the most interesting relics in the museum is a suit of evening clothes on a wax figure which gives a graphic picture of the extreme slenderness of General Jackson, which was accentuated by his great height of six feet one inch. The average man might have spanned the General's waist-line by placing the fingers of his two hands around him. He was, indeed, like a “slender reed.” In fact, this extreme slenderness saved his life in his duel with Major Wilkinson, when he so twisted his body within his great coat as to fool that dead-shot absolutely.

His bedroom, the room where he died, is across the hall from this museum, and is the first room on the

THE HERMITAGE

right after leaving the main hall. Here the visitor stands in meditation at the door, not being permitted to enter. It is like rolling back the curtain of the years and seeing that room on the morning after his burial, for every article of furniture is in place as on that sad morning. Even the dressing-gown of the General is thrown across a chair near the foot of the bed. The little step-ladder is pushed against the high poster bed, ready for the trembling steps of age to mount; the white coverlet is turned back, expectantly. But never again will they feel the warmth of flesh and blood between their folds; never again will they bring rest to the weary and the wasted. They have nursed their charge into the last, long sleep.

It is a great four-poster, this bed. There are eight just like it, all told, at The Hermitage. And what wonderful pieces of furniture they are! How eagerly the furniture hawkers would gobble them up! And how eagerly they would be bought by the collector striving to bring a breath of the old days to his own bedroom!

On the wall over the little fireplace where, through the posters at the foot of the bed, Jackson might see her image the last thing when he closed his eyes at night and the first thing when he opened them in the morning, hangs the portrait of his darling Rachel. She is revealed to us as a woman of fair and even features, and worthy of all the lavish praise he bestowed upon her. She has a kindly, sweet, and gentle air of understanding in her eyes and a firm roundness of her

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

chin. And on her, on these eyes and the beauty of this face, rested the General's dying gaze on that sad morning when he breathed his last—the sobbing of the slaves on the veranda to the right ringing in his ears, the quiet grief of his family close by, but with the smile of hope on his feeble lips, as he went to meet her—her!

His office and library is one of the largest rooms in the building. It is a sort of an addition, or wing, added to the main structure, and does not seem to have been contemplated in the architectural scheme of the original building. But a similar addition on the opposite side of the structure balances up the plan. This latter room was the dining-room. For thirty years The Hermitage was the chief political center of the nation, and "Old Hickory" was constantly receiving, and in consultation with, the leading political figures. Here they came to consult with him, and this large square library was known as the chief stamping-ground of the party. Here are his books, some four hundred and fifty in number, including works of fiction, travel, poems, history, Chinese works, medical and law books, and others.

The upstairs is given over to bedrooms, among them the Lafayette Room where the distinguished Frenchman was entertained during his visit in 1824-25. These rooms are all much alike and are all as well and richly furnished as the bedrooms downstairs. And in the General's day they were usually well occupied.

The dining-room, mentioned before, is one of the

THE HERMITAGE

really "modern" rooms in the whole mansion. Its furnishings and furniture, while rich and valuable, have more of the refinement and subdued lines prevalent today. The long walnut table, the wonderful buffet, the chairs—all look like they might have come out of a modern furniture store. Hundreds of distinguished guests have dined here.

There are strange contradictions in the characters of many of our great men. Washington was calm and reserved, almost austere, in his bearing, yet at times he exhibited no self-control whatever in his terrible fits of temper. Jefferson was the author of a document which rallied the colonial farmers to the defense of "their inalienable rights," yet he never drew the sword to defend these rights no matter how hard pressed they were. Jackson, likewise, had his contradictions. He was capable of the fiercest passion and hatred; he could murder his enemies without the slightest compunctions; his life was a constant storm-center until he retired from the Presidency, an old, emaciated, and broken man. He was more universally loved and hated than any other man this country ever produced. On the other hand, we have his great love and tenderness for his wife, which has already been mentioned, and close to it was his love for horses and trees. His love for horses was, perhaps, an outgrowth of his love for excitement, an offshoot of his restless and adventuresome spirit, for he loved to race horses and won and lost much money on his stable.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

His love for trees was truly an opposite side of his character. It has been said that he loved hickory trees more than any other, but I am inclined to doubt this or he would have planted more of them around The Hermitage grounds. He did plant three or four near his grave in the garden, and he planted them so close that they have grown together near the surface of the ground.

The Hermitage grounds were laid out by him, and the majority of the trees were planted by his own hand. The driveway is laid out in the outline of a mandolin, for some sentimental reason, it is hinted. One of the trees I admired most was a holly which stands in front of The Hermitage; although considerably over one hundred years old, it seems to be only in its youth. There are cedars and forest trees in abundance, generously shading the enormous lawns which sweep in every direction.

Jackson's garden is somewhat larger, I would say, than Martha Washington's at Mt. Vernon, but it is not so well developed or planted. The general scheme is four large beds crossed by walks at right angles, with walks all around it inside the picket fence. Old perennials are planted along these walks; the remainder of the garden is in plain grass lawn. Several trees shade the burial-ground on one corner; a few box-wood stand at the intersection of the paths in the center of the garden.

It was under his beloved trees and in his garden that

THE HERMITAGE

Jackson spent the last eight years of his life. They were among the happiest of his life, and the most peaceful. Every energy, every resource he had was expended in an effort to make The Hermitage the place of his dreams; only the absence of her whom he loved more than life itself denied him complete happiness.

Peaceful as these years were to all outward appearances, they could not bring him complete rest and ease. He tells us himself that there was not a single day in his long life, and "hardly an hour," in which he did not experience great physical pain! His old wounds had never healed properly and his slender frame was racked and worn by the ravages of tuberculosis; during the whole period of his Presidency he carried on with only *one lung* and it was seriously diseased!

This physical pain, which was endured only because of his enormous will-power, explains a great deal of the man's stormy disposition. One's temper often roots in a defective physical condition. It is extremely doubtful whether this country has yet seen a man possessed of Jackson's remarkable capacity of will. As early in his career as his campaign at New Orleans, he was waging a greater contest with his own flagging body than with his external enemies. It is said that during the five weeks prior to the battle of New Orleans he did not remove his clothes, but slept in them because he could not bear the pain of dressing and undressing! When delegations visited him at his headquarters, or reported the state of the city's defense to him, he was forced to

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

support his weight against his table, and he could not so much as drink a glass of the customary wine with them, being obliged to feign his drinking to conceal his true condition. It is said that in all these weeks all he could digest was a little broth and rice. Yet he carried on and won a campaign against the most experienced veterans of Europe.

The greatest legacy he has left us is this tremendous will, this tremendous determination to live and to complete his work. Again and again, through it alone, he confounded his enemies and the enemies of his country. This example is, in the final analysis, more important than his victories, for it is the reason for them.

His life was a great example for good in the nation at a time when it was sorely needed; his fierce partisanship for the common people has never been equaled; his tremendous will to do the work cut out for him in spite of all physical handicaps is the epic of our times. But he left his greatest legacy to us in *The Hermitage*, in the supreme love of home which it portrays, in the lawns and trees and gardens in which he at last found his rest, declining to be buried in the sarcophagus of the Emperor Severus, or to have military honors at his funeral.

CHAPTER III
THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IF YOU have never been to Springfield, you will find yourself, as the train approaches that city, eagerly watching the countryside from the car window and saying to yourself, "So this is the Lincoln country! So this is where Lincoln came as a youth from Indiana; this is where he split rails and kept store, studied law, rode the circuit, and debated Douglas!" That is, you will say this if you happen to come up from the south end of the county, for the country is rugged and Lincoln-like there and it doesn't take much imagination to picture it as it was nearly a hundred years ago. Springfield is rich in Lincoln lore. It was here that he married Mary Todd and all of his children were born; it was here that many of his most famous law-suits were tried in the old sandstone courthouse which still stands; it is here that one may visit his home, the only one he ever owned, and in which he lived for fourteen years; it was here that he made that immortal farewell to his friends and neighbors which is familiar to every schoolboy in the land; and it is here, in Oak Ridge Cemetery, that his ashes, and those of his family, rest in the great monument erected to his memory by a sorrowing nation.

To walk the streets of Springfield is to get close to Lincoln, is to see him a little clearer for all the halo of mystery which the past has placed about him. Too

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

often, in our blind hero worship, we lose sight of the most important point of all concerning our great men and women. We forget that they were human beings, subjected to much the same pains and pleasures coming to all of us. We put them up on a high pedestal and then we lose our perspective of them.

I do not mean to shatter any idols or lower any ideals. All that has come to Lincoln is but his rightful due, and I would that we might even do him greater reverence. The world has not yet appreciated him the half that it will. But let us not spoil it all by forgetting that he was a man, something of an average man, who lived in a house down on a corner lot five squares from the courthouse; a man who had a "back yard" just like thousands of other folks. Let us not forget that he was a man who got into arguments now and then with his wife about how the house should be remodeled, and whether she should plant a lilac bush out on the lawn terrace; let us not forget that he was a man so human that he planted elm trees on his parking, mowed his lawn sometimes, and got scolded other times when he didn't

I suppose that more has been written about Lincoln than about any other character in all the world's recorded history, save only the Carpenter of Galilee. Biographies bearing his name will fill more than the proverbial "five-foot shelf of books." His speeches, state papers, amusing stories, his career as a lawyer, as politician, and as President, have filled countless other

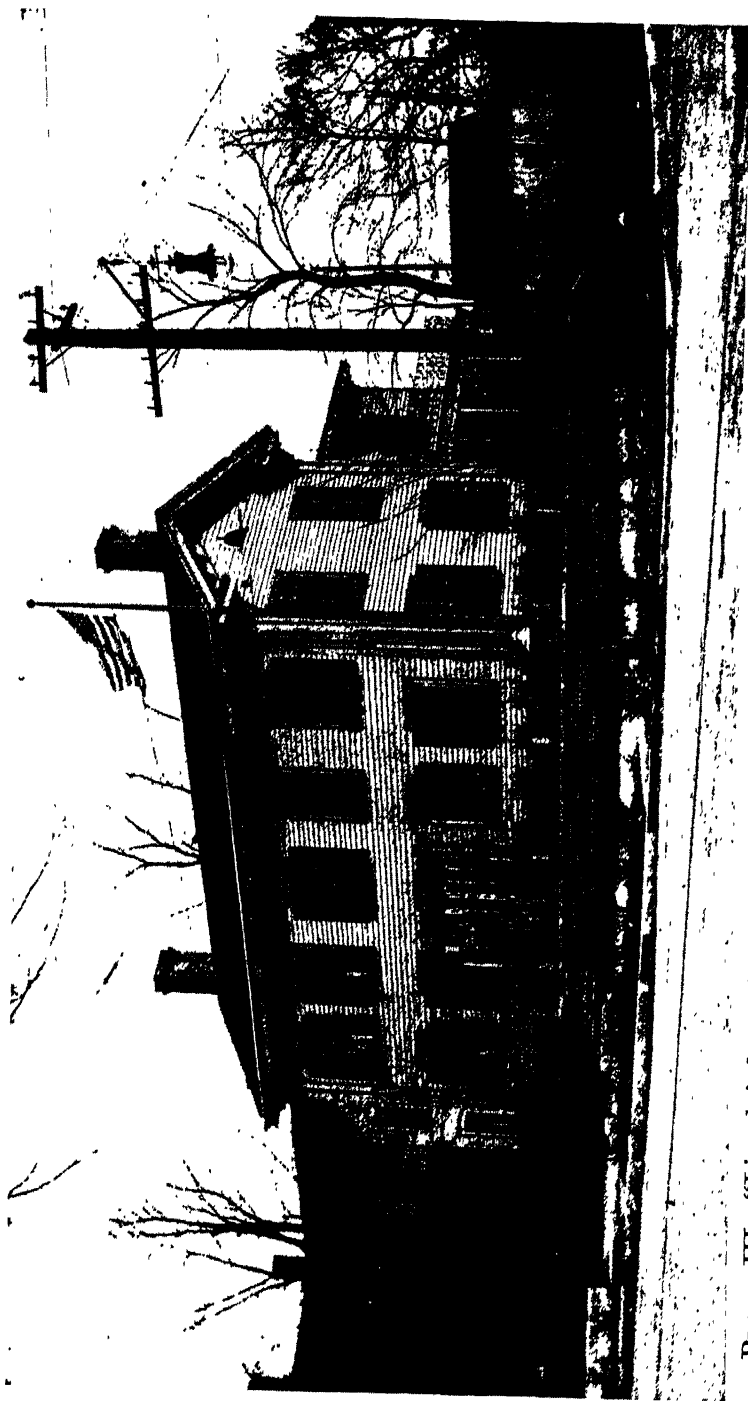


PLATE III. "Lincoln's house is rather large and ungainly for the size of the lot upon which it is built."

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

volumes. Dozens of books have been written about his love for Ann Rutledge, which I suspicion has been greatly overdone. His name has been made the theme of a number of fiction stories, and even the poets and essayists have flocked to him like moths to a bright flame. And a million and a half other men who knew Lincoln, or saw him, or who knew people who knew him, have taken up their pens and added to the Lincoln lore. And the end is not yet. So to write of Lincoln is almost to play with fire—so many surer hands have touched him.

But Lincoln's home, and what it is like, is something we seldom hear about. We have been soaring so much into the higher realms of the abstract that we have not paused to ask whether his house was on a fifty-foot lot or whether he had an acre of ground. I confess I did not know until I went to Springfield, and I have read everything about Lincoln I could lay my hands on these many years.

Lincoln's lot is, I should judge, fifty by one hundred and thirty feet in size; just the average-sized city lot like you and I own. And it is a corner lot, with a little barn in the rear on the alley and a lot fenced off for the horse, or chickens, or pigs—whatever he kept there. Lincoln's fence was the fashionable solid plank fence, about five feet high, and it defines his boundary-line from the house back to the barn.

Out in front he had a brick retaining wall about three and one-half feet high, which is still in a good state of

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

preservation. The original stone steps, which his awkward feet mounted for fourteen years, are still there.

Lincoln's house is rather large and ungainly for the size of the lot upon which it is built. It rears an imposing front to the street, the more so because of its straight and severe lines. In the rear it is graduated off into a series of additions and lean-tos which relieve the harshness somewhat.

It will doubtless be interesting to you to know that the house is built of native walnut clapboards, hand-made. The lath used are of hickory, likewise hand-made. I was informed by the lady in charge (her grandmother was a sister of Mary Todd) that very few nails were used in its construction. Inside, the floors are also of native walnut and so is all the molding and woodwork. The floors are laid in the irregular fashion so common in the days when hand labor fashioned out our building materials. There are narrow boards and wide boards used without rule or design.

Entering the door, one is ushered into an old-fashioned hallway running into the dining-room at the rear. A stairway leads to the upper rooms, and at either side are doors leading to the two "front rooms." On the right is the room where the notification ceremony was held, in which Lincoln was officially notified of his nomination for the Presidency. There are chairs about, a mantelpiece, and a marble-topped table. Lincoln's "secretary," the old-fashioned desk and bookcase which he used in his law office, is in this room

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

and it is at this desk that visitors are requested to register their names.

Across the hall, in the other front room, is where Lincoln was the night he was elected to the highest office in the land. It was in that room that he received the news and the returns on that memorable night. More furniture, in fact, all his furniture, is intact in the house, and the walls around in all the rooms are lined with pictures and letters and relics of the great man and his family.

Back of this room is the "back" parlor, possibly used as a dining-room on extraordinary occasions. Here are more Lincoln curios, among them some sperm-oil lamps which were used at Lincoln's wedding. Adjoining it, to the right, as you enter the house, is the family dining-room, back of it the kitchen, and back of that, to the left, the "summer kitchen." The dining-room is furnished in much the same style as the average dining-room of good taste of the present day. The buffet might have come from some modern furniture store.

When Lincoln purchased the house in the middle forties from a Rev. McBride, he paid \$1,500 for it. At that time it was only one story high, but it was the best house in Springfield. It now has eleven rooms, not counting the halls. An interesting and amusing story is told of the manner in which the addition was added. It seems that Mrs. Lincoln was a very ambitious woman. She wanted very much to have her husband

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

become "somebody" in the community and nation. The time came when the Lincoln homestead was not the "best" in Springfield, and she urged Lincoln to add another story in order to regain for it its old prestige.

"But," Lincoln would urge, "it isn't the house in which you live that determines your standing; it is what you are. Besides, I need the money for other things."

Mrs. Lincoln evidently realized that she was not getting over her desires, so she bided her time. Before long, Lincoln left on one of his periodical trips on the "circuit," attending court in various counties in central and southern Illinois. No sooner had he left town than she called a carpenter and told him to proceed with the addition.

Three months later Lincoln returned to Springfield and, after visiting his office, he walked down the street to his home. He glanced at his house and went right on past the place and half way into the next block before he paused, looked all around as if he were in a strange locality, and finally stopped a small boy, saying to him, "Bub, can you tell me where Abraham Lincoln lives?"

"Why," said the boy, "he lives back in the next block."

Lincoln retraced his steps, stopped opposite his house, then went across the street to an old friend's house. Mrs. Lincoln was by this time watching him with considerable interest, being hidden behind a large

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

vine in the front yard. Lincoln called out to his old neighbor and asked, "Tom, for goodness sake, where does Abraham Lincoln live?"

Mrs. Lincoln then called out, "You come right over here, Mister, and I'll show you where he lives!"

While the great bulk of his utterances which have come down to us are his political speeches and his jokes, we know that the man had an intense love for home. He was grounded in the solid rock of eternal principles which shield and protect the home.

Concerning the ownership of homes, he once said: "Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable, is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe when built."

Lincoln's home is the first we have visited located in the city, on an ordinary city lot. It is likewise the first home of a famous American we have discussed in this series which was unnamed by the owner. In this it is eloquently expressive of the simplicity of Lincoln himself.

Plain, simple, unpretentious, yet large and ample, sturdy, well built, comfortable, without hint of ornamentation—it is indeed expressive of the whole character of the man himself. Its native timber, hewn from

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the bounty of the pioneer wilderness, like the fiber of his character, has endured unto this day. Time will only enhance their value, as it has the walnut of which the house is built.

That he loved the common people with an unexampled devotion is known to all; while he played politics at times, he played with an end in mind, an end uncommon to the average politician. This thought he admirably characterized himself when he said: "Few can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity; and none will do it enthusiastically. Posterity has done nothing for us; and theorize on it as we may, practically we shall do very little for it, unless we are made to think we are at the same time doing something for ourselves."

All that he did was for posterity. No man, in all our history, ever built surer for unborn generations, and got less himself, than Lincoln. His life was one continual round of trial and disappointment. He ran for legislature when very young and was badly beaten. He entered the mercantile business with a shiftless partner and the business failed miserably. He spent fully seventeen years of his life paying off the debts.

He fell in love with Ann Rutledge, became engaged to her, and then Fate leered in his face and snatched her from him. It is said that he was saved from suicide that memorable summer by her brother, who walked the long watches of the night with him.

He ran for Congress and was given another severe

THE HOME OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

drubbing, although he finally did trick Fate and win a term. He sought an appointment to the Federal Land Office and was turned down in spite of his faithful work for his party. In 1856 he was a candidate for the Vice-Presidency and was defeated. In 1858, Stephen A. Douglas gave him another political defeat; and only for the fact that a political accident occurred in 1860 would he ever have won the Presidency. The story by no means ends with his election that year. His administration was one series of reverses and setbacks through four years of blackness. In 1862 his favorite son was snatched from him by Death. But he carried on and accomplished his purpose, which was, as he expressed it many times himself, "to save the Federal Union." And in the hour of victory, with but two short weeks of peace to crown his efforts, an assassin's bullet snuffed out his life.

I thought of all these things as I visited his monument in Oak Ridge Cemetery; I thought of the grim race he had won with adversity, all through the fifty-six years of his life, and I was glad he had won by two weeks! Surely no man could ever rest in greater peace.

His monument, an imposing structure of marble and stone, is but a feeble attempt to portray the great and lasting place he has in the hearts of all Americans, and of all who cherish human liberty around the whole world. To stand before his casket, to see the hundreds of personal relics, pictures, and curios in the museum room, is to be tremendously moved by the great sacri-

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

fices he made all through his life to a principle, to the service of posterity.

In the museum room is a bit of the dress worn on the night of April 14, 1865, by Miss Keene, who was playing the leading rôle in "Our American Cousin." After Booth had fired the bullet into the President's brain, Miss Keene held the bleeding head of Lincoln in her lap until the physicians arrived.

To see that bit of flowered-silk dress, *with Lincoln's blood-stains on it*, comes as the great climax of your pilgrimage. Through your tears, you realize that the man is secure in his place, and that the homes of America are safe so long as we are willing to approach our problems in his unselfish spirit. For his life-blood there before your very eyes, like the promise of the rainbow in the skies, is a living record of the greatest sacrifice man hath made.

CHAPTER IV
BEAUVOIR, THE HOME OF
JEFFERSON DAVIS

BEAUVOIR

“**H**EY, Black Boy, what yo’-all think yo’re doin’?”
Daylight. Silence, save for the above curt challenge, after the dull rumble and swaying of the train all night. I raised the Pullman shade and looked out.

A broad-backed flagman was pulling out a tramp from the rods under our car. The negro, as black as the hour before dawn, slowly crawled to his feet, dragging after him a battered grip, tied with rope.

“Yo’-all hear me, Black Boy! What you think yo’re doin’?”

Sambo shifted his feet uneasily, then mumbled, “Ah’s jest goin’ to N’Orleans, Boss, dat’s all.”

“No yo’ ain’t, nigger, not on the Dixie Flyer! Now git.”

He waved his arms belligerently in the air, and they crunched down the cinders out of sight, arguing as they went.

Fifteen minutes later, I went out on the observation platform. Down the track, on a rail, sat the negro, complacently surveying the flagman who still directed threats at him.

A short, pudgy man, who smoked big fat cigars like bologna sausages, was out even at this early hour, sprawled over two chairs. He took his feet off one with a grunt and pushed it over toward me.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

"Black, isn't he?" He indicated the negro between puffs. "Jamaica nigger. Yeh. Always black like that. Tell 'em every time. Travel down here, outa Chi. They're floaters, mostly."

Shortly, the whistle called in the flagman and the train started to move. The flagman ran down the track, climbed aboard and waved his red flag derisively at the Jamaican. The latter gazed forlornly at us a moment, then sauntered over and crawled on the rods of a freight car. Where there's a will, there's a way!

In the old days "before the War," there were two kinds of slave-holders. First, the Simon Legrees, made famous by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Uncle Tom. They were the type of men who people all kinds of fiction stories—the cruel, merciless villains, carrying whips in their hands and leers on their lips. Then, again, we have the "other" kind, men who owned slaves and profited by their labor, but men who had hearts in their breasts and were kind and considerate, at least a part of the time. Sometimes they lost their temper, no doubt, even as you and I, and had recourse to the doubtful authority of the lash.

Jefferson Davis was a slave-holder. He amassed a considerable fortune prior to the Civil War, owned large plantations worked by slave labor, and was free early in life to devote his time to politics and public discussion. His attitude toward his slaves and his overseer, James Pemberton, reveals at once the beautifully sweet nature of the man.

BEAUVOIR

It is said, on good authority, that he always received this lowly black man in the drawing-room with the utmost deference and respect; that the judgment of the slave was often followed in business deals; that Jefferson Davis treated him at all times as an equal. All this in pursuance of his theory that "that government is best which governs the least." That Davis borrowed this from Jefferson detracts not one whit from its force. I thought of these things as we sped down through Mississippi, the state in which Jefferson Davis lived and toiled through a great portion of his life. For, as you get nearer to New Orleans, you are impressed more and more by the multitudes of negroes you see on every hand. The negro population of Mississippi is something like five times the white population, in spite of the fact, as one Southerner has suggested to me, "they don't count all of them."

Mile after mile along the railroad tracks are the negro shacks, around which swarm the flocks of pickaninnies and 'coon hounds. And back through the cut-over timber, red paths lead to other shacks. These habitations, merely shells and hovels, without paint or pride, are the curse of the South. And what can the South do about it? Only wait through the generations until education reaches these simple people and a desire more than merely to exist is aroused within them.

Indeed, other thoughts come to you as you cross this picturesque country, steeped as it is in the traditions of every period of our history. It was across these

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

bayous that DeSoto, the Spaniard, came in search of El Dorado. He found the Mississippi, the great Father of Waters. Here, around Vicksburg, Champion's Hill, and Jackson, were fought the campaigns which gave us Grant. And none the less honored is Pemberton, his worthy antagonist. Out of this soil sprang the brave Mississippians who, under Colonel Jefferson Davis, saved the day at Monterey in far-away Mexico, when defeat was snatching their standard from them.

And, as you cross into Louisiana, you reflect that four flags have waved over this soil. And in these bayous and inlets there once lurked the pirates of old, almost as numerous as the crocodiles in their waters. Here, you will recall, occurred the great tragic climax of Longfellow's tenderest story, "Evangeline." Evangeline and Gabriel, after their long search for each other through the grim years following their separation at Grand Pre, missed one another in these bayous, one passing up one inlet while the other came down on the opposite side.

Northeast of New Orleans, the coastline is none the less full of historical interest. For one thing, you are on your way to Beauvoir, the last home of Jefferson Davis, Chieftain of the Lost Cause.

It is impossible to describe this wonderful coastline accurately. All the way from Pass Christian to Biloxi is a pine-fringed, dreamy coast where the gentle waves of the Gulf of Mexico kiss the sparkling sands in an eternal embrace of summer. At Biloxi, a busy little

BEAUVOIR

city of ten thousand, set like a jewel on a tiny finger of land, and surrounded on three sides by water—you leave the train to drive back the five miles to Beauvoir.

Your driver, a youth of delightful Southern drawl, proves talkative. He loves the South; he was in the Great War for Old Glory and the safety of Democracy; he warms up when he sees the Legion button on your lapel, and you are fast friends. He speaks of Biloxi and the Gulf, the warm winds and the sunshine, with a fullness of love and a longing for beauty in his voice that thrills you.

Jefferson Davis he mentions almost in a whisper. His voice, I thought, broke with emotion, but when I looked at him he chuckled and changed the subject.

To know the South and the people of the South is to know the great feeling they have for Jefferson Davis. To them he is the very personification and embodiment of the "Lost Cause," to which Time has added a supernatural halo of romance. I sometimes think that their love and their traditions are the stronger because it was a lost cause. It is always thus in the history of peoples. Our sympathies go out to those who have fought the good fight and lost. General Lee is loved and cherished and treasured by every Northerner I have ever talked to. And so it is with Stonewall Jackson, Stuart, Longstreet, and many of the others.

Some day when the fierce fires of passion and sectional hatred shall have died out entirely—in another generation or two—we will likewise come to appreciate

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

to the full the man that Jefferson Davis really was, and the great service he rendered to the Union prior to the Civil War, and thereafter by his example when the odium of defeat had settled over him and Reaction nearly swept Reason from the American continent.

It is not our purpose, in these discussions, to enter into politics or the respective merits of the position our great men and women have assumed in their lives. We care more for the man or the woman as they were in their daily lives, the kind of homes they lived in, and what sort of home-life they lived.

Beauvoir is rightly named. One can sit on the wide veranda which runs around three sides of the cottage and, looking through the dreamy shade of the pines, watch the gleam of the sunlight upon the gentle waves of the Gulf of Mexico. Beauvoir's front yard is the seashore. The shore-line swings around in a sweeping crescent, and Beauvoir is set in the center. The view in every direction is magnificent, and ever suggestive of restfulness and peace. You seem to want to sink down here, far from the strife and confusion of the world, and let the soothing breezes fan your cheeks and cool your forehead. Ships come and go, in the course of the hours you spend there, and sailboats without number cross and recross the vision as they tack back and forth, pleasure-bent, for the whole coastline is now one continual watering resort.

Over in a corner of the yard in the grateful shade of the pines, a number of old men are pitching horseshoes.

BEAUVOIR

They are soldiers who fought for the "Lost Cause," as Beauvoir is now the Confederate Soldiers' Home of the State of Mississippi. One of them told me that he had been with Lee at Gettysburg; another was with Bragg and Johnston; another was with Longstreet, and so on—out of that dim and distant past they brought up echoes of the great days in which they had lived. Another had conducted me through Beauvoir, his tattered cap in hand, and his voice hushed.

The cottage where Jefferson Davis spent his last days is a single-story, commodious affair. The floor is set up perhaps eight feet above the ground, in accordance with the approved custom in the semi-tropical United States. There are no basements under the houses, and they are not built on solid foundations, but on piles or posts. Usually, lattice-work is used for ornamentation between the pillars and to admit a complete circulation of air at all times.

As you enter the door, you come into a wide, high-ceilinged hallway running the full length of the cottage and out onto the rear veranda. Four rooms open off the hallway, two on each side. The two front rooms reminded me a bit, in point of finish, of the one I saw at Mt. Vernon. Both have small fireplaces. The floors are wide pine planks, somewhat worn and impaired in appearance. The walls are a bit dirty, but they are just as they were when Jefferson Davis lived there—the whole place is—and that is worth all else in the estimation of the caretakers.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

In the rear the cottage proper widens out to include the verandas, and extends to the rear in two additions. Here the veranda is on the inside and circles entirely around the inner part. It is completely screened in and a more delightful arrangement could hardly be planned. In the rear one notices the above-ground cistern typical of all far-south homes, where the ground is so low that it is impossible to dig more than three to four feet without striking water. Cisterns, wells, everything, even graves in the cemeteries are above ground.

In the front hallway there is an old battered steamer trunk of leather. I was tremendously curious when I saw it. I wondered if it had been the trunk Colonel Davis had used in his army days; perhaps the one he used on his journeys to Washington as Senator and Secretary of War; perhaps the one he used at Richmond as president of the Confederacy, or the one he had when captured by Federal cavalry, or the one he had taken to Europe when he went there seeking rest and freedom from the persecution which followed him subsequent to the War. But my guide was unable to enlighten me. I am confident, however, that it has seen some of these stirring scenes.

It was to Beauvoir that Jefferson Davis came, after the insurance company, located at Memphis, with which he associated himself following his release from prison, failed and deprived him of all the remaining fortune he had, with the exception of these fifty-odd acres of waste land down on the Gulf Coast. The people of Texas

BEAUVOIR

came to his aid with the offer of a stock farm, which he refused. He conceived the idea that this land could be made to support his family and there he went. He named the place Beauvoir, and although almost in dire poverty, he managed to make out financially.

It was here that he wrote his book, "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate States," in which he defended himself against the charges which had been brought against him, and while he did not surrender the idea he had had all his life that it was possible for a state to secede under the Constitution, he submitted that the War had proved the idea to be impracticable, and without bitterness or passion, sought to write in the arch of the Union these Latin words: *Esto perpetua*.

I have already hinted at his service in the Mexican War. It seems to go without dispute that Colonel Davis' regiment saved the day at Monterey, where Davis received a wound in his foot, which he bore all day refusing to leave the field until after victory was won, and which necessitated him being sent home to recuperate. I might also point out that Jefferson Davis was a graduate of West Point; that he served in the army as a lieutenant for several years; that at the outbreak of the Black Hawk War he was stationed at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and was sent by General Scott down into Illinois to muster into service a number of Illinois companies, among them a company of Clary's Grove boys under the command of Captain Abraham Lincoln. It is a fact that the first time Abraham

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Lincoln ever took the oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States, *it was personally administered to him by Lieutenant Jefferson Davis!*

He was a son-in-law, by his first marriage, to General Taylor, later President of the United States. His Mexican War record gained him an appointment as United States Senator from Mississippi. Failing of re-election, he was appointed Secretary of War in the cabinet of Franklin Pierce.

This service was probably the greatest he contributed to the country. He completely reorganized the army, revised and rewrote the infantry manual of arms, introduced the rifled musket and the minie ball into the ordnance of the army, laying such a sure foundation that later, because of his work, the North had a tremendously more efficient fighting machine than it would have had. It is one of the paradoxes of history that his work as Secretary of War contributed to the defeat of the South later.

Completing his service in the cabinet, he was again returned to the United States Senate where, for nearly ten years, his voice pleaded for caution among his southern associates, although he held steadfastly to his belief that their interpretation of the Constitution was correct. Davis feared the possibility of war more than he courted it, and there is ample historical proof to show that he himself did not look for war until the Federal Government sent aid to Fort Sumter. He looked upon secession merely as a means of scaring the

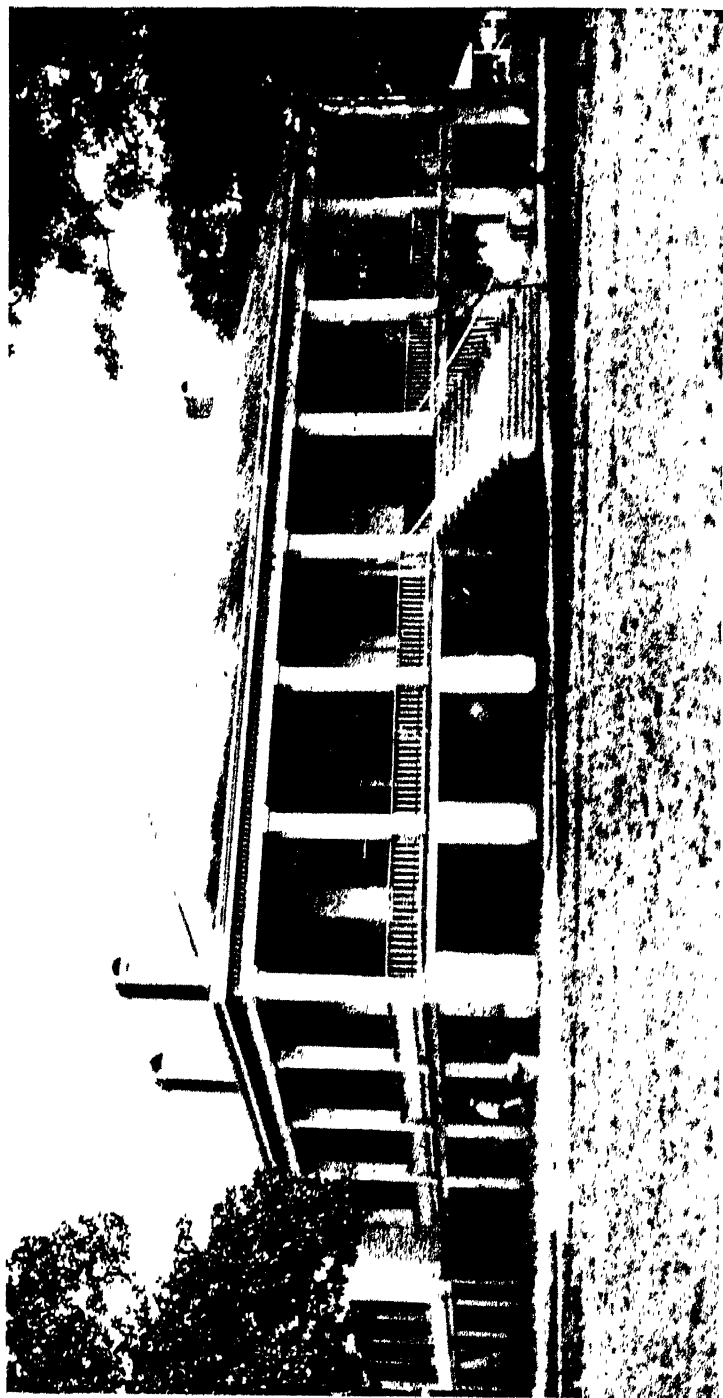


PLATE IV. "Beauvoir is rightly named. One can sit on the wide veranda and watch the gleam of sunlight upon the gentle waves of the Gulf of Mexico."

BEAUVOIR

Federal Government into making concessions so that the South could come back into the Union.

It is said that his last speech in the Senate, as he took leave of his colleagues and left for home after his state had seceded, is one of the masterpieces of eloquence known in recorded history. While he faced largely a hostile audience, it is written that there was not a dry eye in the chamber when he closed, among friend or foe.

Of the long war, the sacrifices, the defeats, the anguish it brought, we all know intimately. Defeat is not sweet to taste, but sometimes our greatest defeats are our greatest victories. Washington lost Long Island, was driven across New Jersey until his army of 18,000 had dwindled to 1,000 ragged men. But he had turned at Trenton and changed defeat into victory; McKinley lost the speakership of the House, and gained the Presidency. The people of the South lost the War, but they set an example for thousands of generations to come in the high honor and supreme courage with which they bore the burdens of defeat.

I know that there are good people who still hate the South; and other good people who frankly hate the North. It is because they do not thoroughly understand. But this feeling, too, shall utterly pass; things cannot and do not endure which are not right.

Lee belongs to the entire nation, but Davis is peculiarly the hero, the great legendary figure, of the South. The distinction between these two great figures will become only the more marked as time goes

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

on. Davis stands for the very soul of the "Lost Cause," and around him gathers all the romance and the glamor and the pathos of it.

To the South, he is "the President." Voices filled with reverence break with emotion at the mention of his name, and spots associated with his life become "holy ground." All time, all events, are reckoned from the War, and Davis was the embodiment of the whole momentous issue.

I was glad when I saw the place Jefferson Davis has in the hearts of the South. As for his error in politics, that has long since been forgotten.

CHAPTER V

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

IT IS a singular fact that our unsung heroes are our greatest benefactors. Common, ordinary folks, going about the day's work with simple, unaffected faith in the goodness of life—adding their little deposit to the common wealth, as the coral insect—living unsung, dying unwept—they are the real milestones of the world's progress.

Great movements naturally produce leaders, someone representative of the purposes and aspirations of the mass he represents, and, world-like, when such a leader has been produced and shoved into the limelight, we fall into the error of worshipping him. We call him great, when the greatness really rested in those hordes of common folks who supported him. We say that Napoleon "crossed" the Alps and swept all before him, as if a little mite of a man could assume such herculean proportions; we say that Lincoln "preserved" the Union while, as a matter of fact, he merely gave leadership to millions of others who really made him possible; and so it goes. Leaders, like gigantic magnets, attract their millions of smaller particles which are in sympathy with their ideals; or, conversely, the ideals of the mob may shove forward one of their own number in sympathy with their purposes, as in the case of Napoleon. Thus the leader, instead of being some super-giant, some god-man, is merely an agent, a representative of

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

some greater and more democratic power hidden behind the tinsel with which we surround him.

We are beginning to get our thinking straightened out. I apprehend that in a few years the history of the world will be entirely rewritten; certainly those portions relating to military history. Not that they have necessarily been untrue, but they have failed to tell the whole truth. Military history, like the tempter on the mountain, has deluded races and nations for thousands of years. It has painted a beautiful mirage on the desert of desolation; it has offered us a golden cup and thrown dust upon our parched lips when we reached for it.

We are straightening out, when we begin to search behind the scenery for the truth, and out of this search we are going to get a new conception of who are really the world's great men and women. I would write of the unsung heroes; the people who go down to the docks and the market-places in the gray dawn, hurrying and shivering to thankless tasks; the people who haul and maul and mine, opening up the forests, tearing out the bowels of the earth, carrying the raw materials to the ends thereof, and back again—that others may live in comparative splendor; the people who work with their bodies, an ounce at a time ebbing out, a fiber broken down, a cell destroyed—on the altar of progress; the people who must do what they are told to do, or open the door to the wolf; the people who are not yet free economically, as they are politically. These are the

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

unsung heroes, the millions of mites who merely do their work as well as they can, hour after hour, day after day.

The son of a certain rich man who owned great factories slipped away one spring day, donned some work clothes, and went to work in a steel mill. That same day he fell in with a big placid Pole, a fellow worker. The Pole attracted the attention of the young man, and he asked him as he described his day, "But what fun can you get out of life working like this all the time? When you aren't working you are sleeping to catch up with your rest."

The Pole swept a grimy hand toward the heavens, and answered simply: "Me watch the star; Melika, she watch 'im too! Sometime she come t' me, an' we watch 'im together!"

Well may we rejoice that the unsung heroes have had the stars to confide in, to renew their hope and their strength to carry on their tasks. Hope springs eternal, and it has given us many a gigantic figure from the ranks of the lowly.

Not long ago I went to Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. Far down on Arch Street is the home of Betsy Ross, the widowed seamstress who gave us Old Glory. Betsy Ross is the patron saint of the unsung heroes, one who, because of the fact that she plied her needle well, achieved the reward of fame.

I went to Independence Hall first, because it is naturally the spot where all feet turn. There you see

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the Liberty Bell, which sounded the death-knell of autocratic government over the thirteen colonies. You stand in the room where the Declaration of Independence was read, passed, and signed. You can even see John Hancock sitting at the little table on the small platform as he gravely reaches for the quill pen; you see Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, and feeble old Charles Carroll of Carrollton crowding around to sign the document that was to make them immortal or give them the hangman's noose. The very chairs are there that they used; you glance around, long and earnestly, and then you feel like backing out, as if in the presence of royalty.

"Where," I asked an old guard, "is the home of Betsy Ross?"

"Go down here to the corner by the old Supreme Court Building, walk two blocks to your left to Arch Street, turn to your right, and walk two and one-half blocks."

I loitered a bit in the park in front of Independence Hall. Here, on the left, is the old Congress Hall. It was here that the two houses of Congress met for several years; it was here that Washington was inaugurated President the second time, also John Adams. I had been in the meagre little hall, marveling at the growth this country has had—you couldn't comfortably seat the New York delegation in that chamber today. It is now a gallery for historical paintings, mostly of General Washington, Franklin, and Old Philadelphia.

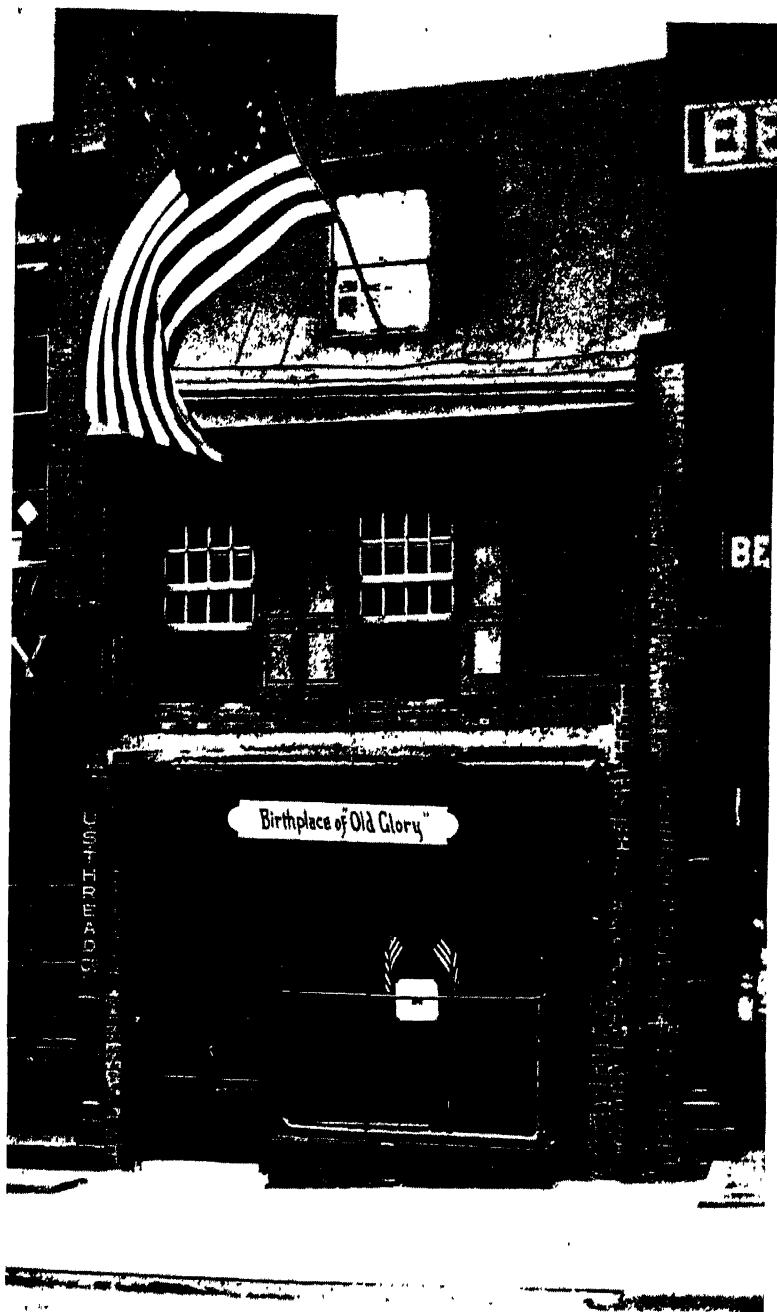


PLATE V. "The Birthplace of Old Glory."

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

In the center is Independence Hall, the old state house of Pennsylvania, and to the right is the old Supreme Court Building, presided over in the early days by John Jay.

At the corner of Arch Street, where our guide has told us to turn, we stop to examine an old brick wall, higher than our head, rather aged and moss-grown. We look in through a gap in the wall, facing on Arch Street. It is a cemetery, covered with ancient graves. We seem not to hear the roar of traffic about us, the clang of the cars, the shouts of the drivers. In the noise and confusion, we are transported back to other days when these ashes were the wit and beauty, the brawn and brain of Revolutionary Philadelphia. Somehow, a snatch comes to us from Gray, who immortalized the unsung heroes: "All that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave. . . ." We turn to pass on, when the thought strikes us that it is peculiar that the wall should be torn out here. We glance at our feet, and there, almost against the sidewalk, is a great stone slab imbedded in the ground which reads: "Doctor Benjamin Franklin" and beside it the words "Deborah Franklin."

The grave of Franklin! Then we notice, on either side of the wall, bronze tablets commemorating the sage. But, somehow, we are ashamed that it should be true; ashamed that in all this noise and roar and march of hurrying feet, the wisest man the country has produced should be lain. Surely, there is still work for patriotic Americans to do.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

We pass on, and pause again before another high and ancient brick wall, which a tablet tells us is the home of the Society of Friends, the ground of which was set aside by William Penn and has remained thus ever since. These wonderful grounds, with their lawns and trees and plain brick buildings, while not large, bulk large on our political horizon, for they are one of the cornerstones of our National philosophy. They express, in measure, the supreme value of the religious liberty which we all enjoy.

And but a short way down quaint old Arch Street, and diagonally across, we see Old Glory waving to the breeze. It hangs out of a second-story window of a tiny little brick house, wedged in between two bigger structures as if its very life were being squeezed out. A sign over the door reads, "The Birthplace of Old Glory."

I doubt if the Betsy Ross House is more than twenty to twenty-two feet wide. It looks like a little doll-house in comparison to the homes of other famous Americans we have discussed in this series. It is long and narrow, with the narrow side facing the street; the ceilings are not especially high, indeed, not much over one's head. The rooms are small, snug, and exceedingly compact. I imagine that in the day of Mistress Ross it was a neat, cozy little home, as spick and span as could be.

The "front" room is now a shop where curios are passed out for your quarters and dimes, if you are so inclined. Those who have the post-card habit can

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

address cards to all the folks back home—and some others who haven't been thought of for years!—and the money all goes toward keeping Old Glory flying out there over the sidewalk.

Back through a tiny, narrow little hall, and raised just two steps, is the living-room, or sewing-room, where Mistress Betsy Ross used to sew the livelong day. It is even smaller than the front room. I didn't measure it, but I should say that it is about ten by fourteen feet in size. The fireplace at one end makes it look even smaller. On the right, as you enter, the entire room is flanked with "bay" windows which used to flood the interior with sunlight and relieve the Widow Ross' eye-strain. In these windows she grew potted plants and flowers, and it is said that she used to lay her sewing down at times and get an old iron kitchen fork and loosen the soil around her precious companions, and water them with loving care. She had a canary bird, brought to her by some seafaring friend, whose lovely melody flooded the cheery little room even as the fragrance of the flowers.

But all that is now past! The cheeriness is gone with the withered blossoms and the stilled voice of the bird. The only sounds are the creak of the old threadbare floors under foot, and the clang of the cash register out front. I thought, as I looked at those old and worn floors, with their cracks oozing the dirt of more than a century since the prim seamstress laid down her needle, that she must be troubled about it, if she knows.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Even the sunlight no longer shines into that little room through those old colonial windows. If the spirit of Betsy Ross could return and sit in her chair in those windows, she could not see the blue of the heavens or the stars of the sky, as of yore. For the big, rude building which Commerce has erected next door has pushed its brusque shoulder right up in the window's face and all the outlook it now has is upon row after row of brick and mortar. Once it overlooked vacant fields where the flowers nodded and the butterflies wandered.

Aye, we know that she sat in this window and gazed up at the stars many a night. It is given woman to do this and perhaps it does not become us to pry too much into her secrets. But I fancy that Betsy Ross, being a woman and a widow, had real reasons for sharing her thoughts with the stars on lonely evenings.

It was into this room that General Washington, Robert Morris, and Colonel George Ross, the Committee appointed by the Continental Congress to bring in recommendations for a flag, came to secure the aid of Mistress Ross. Her husband had died some years before and she had fallen back upon her nimble and neat fingers as a means for supporting herself and two daughters. Her specialty was the making of marine flags for the seamen visiting Philadelphia port, and there is no doubt but that she knew more about flags than all the sages in Independence Hall.

The Committee had worked out an idea, and it was

THE HOME OF BETSY ROSS

to get the advice of Betsy Ross that they proceeded to her house, going the very way we went. When Mistress Ross saw the plan, she asked quickly, addressing Washington, "But why, sir, do you have six points on your stars? The stars of heaven have only five! And since they say the colonies are a new constellation in the political firmament, shouldn't we follow the stars of heaven?" Yes, she had sat at her window and watched the stars.

When the Committee returned some days later to view her work, they were unanimous in their approval of it. What they said to her, whether they paid her anything—if so, how much—we do not know. But the Widow Ross, whose outlook on life was very drab, who seemed doomed to bear a burden out of all proportion to the average woman of her day, earned with her neat fingers and clear-thinking mind an eternal place in the history of America. Her name and the legacy she gave us will endure as long as our institutions do.

Did the Widow Ross know that day what she had done? Did she see into the future and feel the throb of destiny in her heart? It is extremely doubtful. She had made flags by the dozens, no doubt—that was her work. Who would think that this flag out of all others she had made should bring her immortal fame and turn her little home into a shrine for millions of people? But she did labor under a responsibility—the desire to do her work well, to be neat, accurate, and prompt. It is said that her flags were so well made that they out-

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

lasted all others, and seafaring men on the seven seas swore by her work. Thus it was that her reputation came to Dr. Franklin and he, in turn, communicated it to Washington.

The day's work weighs heavily at times upon all of us. There comes a day or an hour when we want to run away from it all—to shirk it, to get away from it. Or, perhaps we feel that we are not "appreciated," that our efforts are wasted as on the "desert air." In these moments let us remember again the seamstress of Arch Street, who never "dropped a stitch" in her lowly work, but whose fingers worked on each day. And one day they bound her name inseparably to our hearts, as her thread wove together her flags.

CHAPTER VI
HARDSCRABBLE, THE CABIN HOME OF
GENERAL GRANT

HARDCRABBLE

THE Romans had a strong sense of national security. No matter what they might do, Rome would endure. "There will always be a Cæsar," a proverb ran, "to save Rome." So they surrendered their sense of individual responsibility and sowed the seeds of moral corruption which finally ate the heart out of their vaunted civilization. When the Huns and Vandals were thundering at the gates of Rome, their Cæsar was found hiding under his couch! National security is not obtained by the name of dead heroes but has its active price in the markets of Today. It must be constantly earned or the penalty yielded.

Some such feeling about our own country is heard on every hand. We look about us and see the present might and power of America; we read our history of strong men and women and note that whenever the hour of trial has come the right man has stepped forth to close the widening gap in the dyke of national defense, and we say: "Our country will endure forever! There will always be a Lincoln or a Grant to pull us through."

So long as the moral fiber exists among the majority of the rank and file which produced our Lincolns and Grants, just so long will we, indeed, be secure. If our dissolution ever comes, it will come from within—like that of Rome. And so long as the integrity of the home

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

is preserved, and the family relation held upon the highest possible altar of morality, just so long can we expect to produce men and women who will pull us through any crisis. Materialism, gratification, self-indulgence—these are the enemies we need to watch.

Ten miles southwest of St. Louis on the Gravois Road, and on the banks of the Gravois Creek, is "Hardscrabble," the log-cabin which Ulysses S. Grant erected with his own hands in the late summer of 1854, and where he lived for nearly five years. It is the only home he ever owned until after he retired from the Presidency. It was located upon land owned by Mrs. Grant, who, as Julia Dent had lived in the vicinity as a girl.

Grant had served in the Mexican War, during which time he was married, and subsequent thereto had been stationed in California. He now held the rank of captain in the regular army, but soon found that he could not support his family on the pay he received, so resolved to resign and try his hand at farming. He thus describes in his *Memoirs* how his cabin came to be built: "In the late summer of 1854 I rejoined my family, to find in it a son whom I had never seen, born while I was on the Isthmus of Panama. I was now to commence, at the age of thirty-two, a new struggle for our support. My wife had a farm near St. Louis, to which we went, but I had no means to stock it. A house had to be built also. I worked very hard, never losing a day because of bad weather, and accomplished

HARDSCRABBLE

the object in a moderate way. If nothing else could be done I would load a cord of wood on a wagon and take it to the city for sale. I managed to keep along very well until 1858 when I was attacked by fever and ague. I had suffered very severely and for a long time from this disease while a boy in Ohio. It lasted now over a year, and, while it did not keep me in the house, it did interfere greatly with the amount of work I was able to perform. In the fall of 1858 I sold out my stock, crops, and farming utensils at auction and gave up farming."

Thus, in terse words which reflect something of those grim years in his life, he hurriedly passes over what must, even then have brought back the heart-aches. "I managed to keep along very well until 1858," is the way he dismisses four long years of hardships and struggle. Yet he devotes nearly two volumes to a description of his activities in four other years which are not half so important in many respects, *because these four years there on a timber farm were the years that made the Grant who won the war!*

I thought of these things as I stood under the great, majestic trees at the rear of the cabin, early in March. I had been there many times before, but each time a newer conception of the greatness of the man and the section of national life he represented, had come to me. I looked up into those great elms and oaks and I wondered what their eyes had seen; what they knew of that grim struggle there at their feet for four long years

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

—if they knew that under their arching branches that little silent man had waged a struggle, like Jacob with the angel, in which the fate of a nation rested.

I know something of what that struggle must have been, for my father once cleared a farm and hauled mine-props and cord-wood to town, an experience I clearly recall. I know something of what it means to go into timberland with nothing but an axe, driven by grim necessity; I know something of the incessant struggle with the forces of Nature when the wolf is snapping at your heels. *And Grant had four years of that.*

There is something reassuring about a log-cabin set in a knoll of trees above a winding creek. The very ruggedness of the place is suggestive of the strength of those departed souls who once wrought shelter and hearthstone out of the naked woods. How many of us today could go into the woods with an axe and fashion such a house as Grant built? How many of us could endure the wagging heads and the biting tongues as he did for more than four years of utter failure, as the world measures such things?

The cabin is a story and a half in height, large and commodious for that day; it is, in fact, two log-cabins set end to end. There are two large rooms downstairs, each with its fireplace, and a hallway. The windows are large for those usually found in cabins. The floors are wide planks, hewn by hand. The fireplaces are of brick and limestone. Formerly they were chinked with clay,

HARDSCRABBLE

but this has been replaced with cement. A number of the old Grant fireplace tools are still there, among them a homemade bellows fashioned out of a hollow log, the big stopper edged with feathers.

It is simple, strong, sturdy. It has endured to this day, and our great grandchildren will find it much the same when they visit it. It is Grant all over, and if we have ever discussed the home of a famous American in this series that accurately expressed the kind of person who lived in it, the Grant cabin certainly does. It breathes the personality of the man—logical, plain, direct, practical, sturdy.

I would not create the impression that General Grant was a stern, grim, cruel man, that he had no human side, for I do not believe this was the case. I detect in his Memoirs and in his acts an undercurrent vastly different from the man he was in the field or in public life. Grant the soldier and Grant the man were two entirely different persons. He did his duty as a soldier just as he learned to do his duty to his family—to the best of his ability, in the woods along Gravois Creek, never complaining, never waiting, never criticizing the weapons he was obliged to fight with. But underneath it all, he was pretty much of a human being. He served in the Mexican War and led the army in the Civil War, but he says, "both of which were unholy wars." We find him so much incensed at General Halleck after Shiloh that he was going to resign; but Sherman talked him out of it.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

He was a man so much hammered by Fate that, like good steel, he came off the anvil each time with a better temper and a keener edge. The very struggle for existence from 1854 to 1858 sobered him greatly and acquainted him with the realities of life so strongly that he never lost his direct, matter-of-fact way in dealing with the problems placed before him. It gave him one formula—attack the problem before you with all your might and “fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.” He had no theories, save action; no hobbies, save work; no pose, no sham.

His Memoirs reveal him to have been a sensitive man; not vain and conceited, but of the retiring and bashful type. It is plain that he didn't relish jokes upon himself and that he could not hold his own in verbal byplay with his fellows, hence his silence. He was much of a dreamer, but he kept his dreams to himself, because two experiences in his youth taught him that our friends are more likely to laugh at than sympathize with our dreams. He tells us that while he was a cadet at West Point, when Martin Van Buren and General Scott reviewed the students there, he had a presentiment that one day he “would be in General Scott's shoes” as general of the army. But he kept it to himself.

Doubtless he was sensitive about his career as a farmer; I have no doubt but that it took four years there in the timber before he would accept the position which his father had offered him in his leather business.



HARD SCRABBLE

Finally, an admitted failure, he took his father's offer and went to Galena, Illinois. How little we know about *success* and about *failure*! Grant going to Galena in a heaviness of heart, having to fall back upon parental support for his own family, was pitied by everyone who knew him; we need no imagination to sense something of what he felt deep down in his own heart. Yet he was then equipped to win the greatest success that ever came to a republican soldier! Our own viewpoint and that of the world often gets warped, because the world hasn't yet learned that character is the real criterion of success.

Well may we be thankful that he had this streak of pride, because it gave him the training in moral discipline which the country was to need so soon. It is in the persistent crucible of heat and action that we are made strong, in the eternal struggle. If Grant had taken his ease early in life, he doubtless would be resting in a nameless grave today, for he would have followed his natural bent, raised horses and dabbled in farming at Georgetown, Ohio. He wouldn't even have gone to West Point because he detested it and the army. He tells us that on the way to take his entrance examinations he frankly hoped there would be a wreck and that he would be injured so that he wouldn't be accepted. He stayed in Philadelphia five days, hoping something would happen to him, and got a scolding from home because of his dilatoriness. Then he took comfort in the thought that he wouldn't pass anyway; he was

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

terribly disappointed and surprised when he did pass, and hoped all through his course that he would fail. He admits that if the classes had been reversed he would have been near the top.

I need not recall to you his simple, unaffected manner, his quiet nobility of character. He was at once the most unbusinesslike hero this world has produced, and, at the same time, the very essence of "business." He confesses that as a clerk he was a failure because the only way he could "keep a paper from getting lost was to carry it around in my hat or my pocket." Only once did he put on his uniform in the field, and that was at Chattanooga, and he seldom wore the insignia of his rank.

I believe he got his aversion for pomp and dress from General Taylor under whom he served in Mexico. Grant himself tells us that Taylor wore his uniform only twice in the field, and points out that each time the experience ended disastrously for Taylor. Grant's mind was constantly on one thing, the objective, and in this he was the most businesslike character we have produced. That is the great side of his character. Do the thing; get it done; hit it hard and keep hitting until it gives away.

His regard for woman is one of the finest sides of his nature. His love for Julia Dent must have been intense, and she certainly was a strong and noble woman. She came from a family rated as well-to-do and had been given every advantage in her girlhood; she went down

HARDS CRABBLE

into the woods with him and stood loyally by his side through all those years of adversity. It was hand in hand, you will recall, that Man and Woman left the Garden, and it is only hand in hand that they will ever return.

Grant's aversion for uncouth stories reveals his wonderfully tender, good, and lofty character. He suffered no man to tell such a story in his presence, and it is said that if he ever exhibited anger it was when someone tried to tell him such things.

Did Grant have a garden at Hardscrabble, his cabin home? I do not know, but he probably didn't. He had no need for such an avenue to gratify a love for beauty. The woods on his farm, the wild flowers, the gurgling creek at the back door, certainly entered into his heart. He loved nature, this we know, because he always wanted to live in the country and raise horses. His service in California completely won him to that wonderful climate, and he tells us that it was his purpose to farm near St. Louis and make enough money to take his family to California, and that he never gave up this dream until Congress passed the Lieutenant-Generalcy Bill making him general of the army. We know that trees and flowers and landscapes softened his nature, else he would have been an embittered and disillusioned man after his hard struggle and adversity on Gravois Creek.

It is well that we point to him as one of our great and characteristically American heroes. He sprang straight

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

from that same strata of life which gave us Lincoln; both men were made great and eternal because their lowly struggles with the forces of life taught them a deep sense of responsibility. They learned to subdue self—and that means everything.

Other Grants may come to save the day for us and solve knotty problems in the future, but if they do, they will come the same way that Grant did. They will be willing to sink self in their national duty; they will have the fighting heart and the persistency to keep after the objective until it is attained. They will come from the ranks of those who love the simple life and have the art of contentment in their daily grind. And they will be home-makers and home-builders, not merely palace-graspers.

CHAPTER VII
THE HOME OF GENERAL TAYLOR

THE HOME OF GENERAL TAYLOR

SOME twelve to fourteen miles from Louisville is the home of General Zachary Taylor, the great hero of the Mexican War and the twelfth President of the Republic. As I made the drive early in March, out through Cherokee Park and along the old pike, it was hard to realize that I was not on my way to visit The Hermitage again, for Taylor's home is situated from Louisville much as Jackson's home is situated from Nashville. The striking similarity is further emphasized when you reach the Taylor farm. It is laid out much as The Hermitage grounds are; both are situated about the same distance from the main pike; both are similarly laid out, and the general countryside is strongly suggestive the one of the other.

I went first to Cave Hill Cemetery, where his remains are at rest. The cemetery, a family resting-place covering perhaps two acres, is on a little knoll overlooking the highway in one direction and the old homestead in the other. In the center of it, and facing the highway, there stands a monument to General Taylor—a tall shaft surmounted by a uniformed figure of the General. His tomb is built of marble blocks, and over the door is the simple inscription: "Z. Taylor, Died July 9, 1850."

There are two points of interest about the monument which strike the incisive historical student, and which

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

should be mentioned in passing. The first is the uniformed figure of the General, which is not at all characteristic of the man. General Taylor had even a greater aversion for military pomp and dress than Grant, who tells us that Taylor appeared in uniform only twice, to his knowledge. The other point, which is extremely characteristic of the man, is the quotation of his last words which appears on the monument. They are: "I have only tried to do my duty. I am now ready to die. My only regret is for the friends I leave behind me." It is well to keep these words in mind, as you recall his life and its great passion, which we hope to bring out further along. They are an index to the man—"I have only tried to do my duty" expresses in soldierly language volumes in self-denial and renunciation. For General Taylor wanted most of all in this life to be able to be home and live with his family over there on that other knoll, and live, in quiet and happiness, the life of a planter. And, since Fate plays strange pranks, he was denied throughout his life the one thing he wanted the most.

Jefferson Davis was his son-in-law. It is recorded that the old General stubbornly refused to allow Davis, then a young officer in his command, to marry his daughter, contending that she should never be condemned to the roving life he had known. Jefferson Davis soon resigned from the army and went back to Mississippi to become a planter. In due time he made his fortune and returned to marry Miss Taylor. We

THE HOME OF GENERAL TAYLOR

do not know for sure that Taylor ever gave his consent. The popular legend around Louisville is that Jefferson Davis and his bride were married in the corner parlor and had their wedding breakfast across the hall; while others say that it was a runaway marriage consummated without the General's consent. However that may be, the incident proves that the "rough frontier colonel," as Webster called him, was exceedingly human down in his heart and had a stubborn passion for peaceful pursuits seldom associated with stern military men.

Taylor was born in Virginia in 1784. One year later, his father, who had been a colonel in the Revolutionary War, removed to Louisville, then in Kentucky County, Virginia, and built the house which is the subject of this sketch. It was, indeed, a mansion for that time. It is said that the Indians used to come through the beech forests for miles to see the "white man's wigwam" and that they paused speechless in wonder before it. The house is built of brick, and has been painted many times, which doubtless explains the fine state of preservation it is in: the porches and floors are as they were in Taylor's day, and some of the woodwork is original. The floors are of white ash and certainly excel anything I have seen in houses built in that period.

A large hall runs through the center of the house, in true colonial fashion. On the left, as you enter from the main entrance, are two large parlors which open into each other. In one, Jefferson Davis is said to have been married. It was in these rooms, with their

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

typically colonial woodwork and fireplaces, that Taylor spent such time as he had when living at Louisville, with his family. But these hours were all too short, and from 1836 until his election to the Presidency in 1849, he was stationed at various posts in the South.

The chandelier in the "Davis" room dates from the seventeenth century, and General Taylor's clock and candlesticks are on the mantel. In the hallway, you notice a photograph of the General taken just before his election, said to have been his favorite likeness. Indeed, it also proves that Taylor suffered from human vanities, for he has a lock of his hair draped over his forehead, in imitation of the great Napoleon. It is said that he flattered himself with the thought that he was the "Napoleon of the West."

His military record is, I suppose, familiar to all. He joined the army in 1808, when an older brother died. He served at New Orleans until yellow fever laid him low; later he appears on the banks of the Wabash where he defended a fort against the Indians with great success. Prior to the Black Hawk War he was stationed in Wisconsin; after that he was ordered to Florida, where he won a great victory over the Seminole Indians at Lake Okechobee. He was made a brigadier-general for this and military governor of Florida. He next went to Louisiana where he remained until the Mexican War broke out. Every battle in which he engaged there was a victory, and some were won at great odds, notably Buena Vista, where with 500 regulars and



PLATE VII. The home of General Zachary Taylor, near Louisville, Kentucky

THE HOME OF GENERAL TAYLOR

5,000 raw volunteers, he defeated Santa Anna with 21,000 regulars and inflicted three times the loss he sustained himself. Needless to say, his victories made him President, but before we pass over this stage of his career, it is worth while to look behind the scenes a bit and uncover another instance where unsavory politics received its just dues.

The Mexican War was provoked entirely as a political measure by the party then in power. Grant calls it "an unholy war" and openly states that it was the result of a scheme to secure more territory, which, under the Missouri Compromise, would become slave territory. Taylor was ordered to occupy territory claimed by Mexico and had actually engaged in battle before war was declared. General Scott, then in command of the army, was a Whig and known to be ambitious to become President.

The administration refused to permit him to go to the front because any success he might have won would reflect to the advantage of the Whig party. Taylor was given a free hand, but after he had won two big victories and was becoming the popular hero, imagine the consternation of the party in power when its leaders made the tardy discovery that he also was a Whig!

General Scott was then summoned in and ordered to proceed to Mexico at once, the party leaders knowing full well that he would do everything in his power to "kill off" General Taylor. Scott acted exactly on this

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

motive. Arriving at Taylor's headquarters when the latter was absent, he promptly deprived Taylor of all the regulars in his command, except five hundred, and proceeded with them to Vera Cruz, where he, in turn demonstrated his great military ability by winning a campaign the like of which had not been seen since the days of Cortez.

But Taylor was made of real mettle and subsequently won Buena Vista and continued to hold the popular imagination. The administration had the satisfaction of winning new territory for the Union, but it lost the next election to General Taylor and the Whigs, proving that "the best laid plans of mice and men. . . ."

There are no gardens at Taylor's home. Perhaps gardening smacked too much of the ways of civilization for the elder Taylor when he laid out his estate on this "dark and bloody ground" back in 1785. Perhaps the natural beauty of the countryside, the great forest trees, beech, oaks, and elms, with their grassy carpet and native shrubbery, particularly crab-apple thickets, satisfied his nature in this direction. But he did lay out a driveway and front lawn with an eye to beauty. One cannot help but wonder, when standing on this lawn, whether Andrew Jackson had ever visited here before he laid out The Hermitage grounds—they are so much alike.

Zachary Taylor himself was not home enough to indulge in gardening, but I fancy that he would have been a rare gardener had duty not called him away, for

THE HOME OF GENERAL TAYLOR

it is under these stern and war-like exteriors that we find the most peaceful natures, after all. Taylor thought he looked like Napoleon and was flattered in the thought, but he loved most of all his fireside. What a paradox for a soldier!

There is something lovable and decidedly human under these gruff exteriors with which men, particularly men of war, surround themselves. One cannot down the persistent smile that comes when one contemplates that figure of Napoleon in relation to Taylor's own homely ways of life. He had none of the military adventurer's faults, in spite of all his posings and his draping of locks over the forehead. He could not trample over the hearthstones of millions in pursuit of his "star of destiny"—he loved his own home too much and clung too stubbornly to its virtues ever seriously to shake the orderly foundations of society.

That refusal to permit his daughter to marry a soldier with his consent gives the lie to his posing. Napoleon gloried in the dazzle and the spectacle of the military life; he made every member of his family the creatures of his military greatness. Taylor shrank from it and put out his sturdy arm to shield his own daughter from anything that savored of it.

That regret for "the friends I leave behind me" also gives us further evidence of the humanness of the man. He was not friendless and aloof, in spite of his gruffness. He had his cronies and he loved them. He thought of them after he naturally thought of his duty to his

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

country. They came next. They crowded close. He had nothing to regret in the line of duty, but his friends! Ah, how he would miss them!

Out of it all we get glimpses of that deeper nature, and that truer nature, of man. Home, and all the things that home life call to mind, are the things we most desire, after all. Love of home, love for the fireside, and the simple pursuits of peace form one of the strongest links in our nature.

•

CHAPTER VIII

**MOUNT PLEASANT, THE HOME OF
BENEDICT ARNOLD**

•

MOUNT PLEASANT

NOW and then men are born who give great promise of reaching the most sublime heights of usefulness and fame. They often come out of the stark blackness of deep national trial and tribulation; they gleam awhile with meteoric brilliancy in the heavens of destiny, apparently irresistible in their power, and then something happens—something snaps—and they go out with a fitful sputtering, like the last glow of a spent rocket.

If we care to retrace our steps and search deep enough to discover the causes of their deflection from the path of honor and service, invariably we find that some false trait in their own characters has laid them low and brought them the great disappointment. Oftentimes, they are full of excuses and accusations, quick to explain, to charge, to deny—striving to cover up their own shortcomings like a guilty criminal—never willing to admit their own deficiency. In the end, Time tells the tale, and Time generally renders to every man his dues.

Benedict Arnold, whose home we consider in this sketch, is something of a case in point. Here dwelt a man whose vile name has come down the years to us as a living embodiment of infamy and perfidy, a synonym for treachery and duplicity, for treason and betrayal. We are taught in our histories to despise

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

and loathe him, and because of the enormity of his crime against patriotism, every other act of his stormy career suddenly takes on a new and terrible aspect. Many stories are attached to his name, tending to reveal the shameless character of the man, and, in accordance with the law that when a man is down all will take a swift kick at him, he has been buffeted about in the mire these many years. And the game goes merrily on.

We hold no brief for Benedict Arnold, or for what he did. He was shrewd enough to know the full meaning of the step he was taking and to calculate on the penalties thereof, in case of failure. He went ahead with his eyes open, and in sowing the wind, he reaped the whirlwind of national condemnation.

Whatever our loathing for him may be, whatever feeling of repulsion we may have at the mention of his name, there runs through all of us a vast streak of pity and sympathy for the man. That attractive but fictitious picture which some writer has drawn of him dying in a lonely London basement wrapped in his old Continental uniform, tugs at the heart-strings of all of us. And that bit of pathos which schoolboy orators recite, entitled "Old Ben Arnold," portraying the receipt of the news of his treason by his own uncle, and his crushing helplessness under the blow, have helped us to forgive a bit.

It is not our purpose to strive to reverse the verdict of history, or soften the sentence under which his name

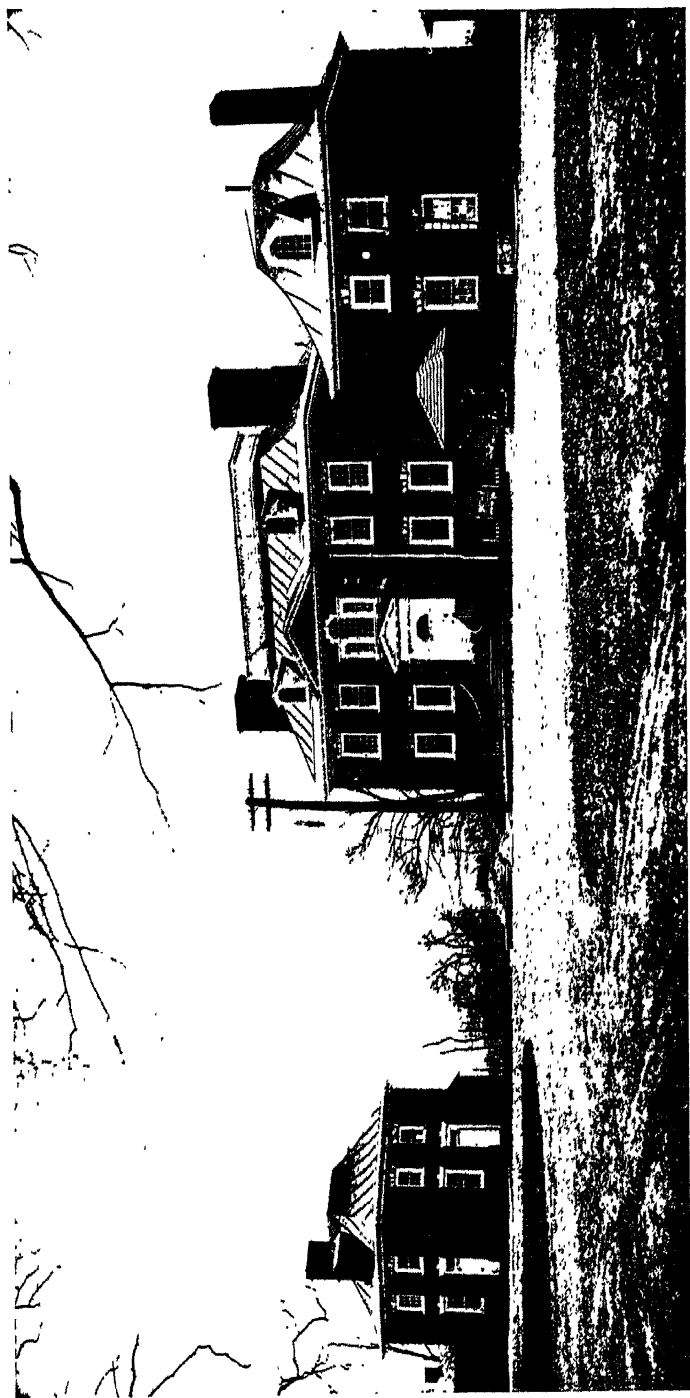


PLATE VIII. Mount Pleasant, the home of Benedict Arnold. The group of buildings from rear entrance; servant quarters and the kitchen were located in the two smaller buildings.

MOUNT PLEASANT

is prostrated, but in justice to the man and his great service to the country before his deflection from the path of honor, it does seem worth while to recall the causes which led up to his treason—causes which too often are never examined by people anxious to condemn. Surely we should not do less, as we visit his home.

Mount Pleasant, Benedict Arnold's home, is located in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, on a high bank overlooking the Schuylkill River. It was the most pretentious mansion of Revolutionary times in that city, and this house played a large part in causing his treason. It might be said that, in one sense, it was the proximate cause of his treason, because it produced a circumstance which Arnold was unable to overcome in honor.

After the battle of Saratoga, where Arnold was seriously wounded, he was brought to Philadelphia by Washington and made military governor. This was looked upon as the second most important command in the army and was given to Arnold because Washington was especially anxious to show him honor and favor as a mark of his own personal esteem. Arnold soon was entering into the activities of social life in the capital with all the reckless abandon and headlong impetuosity that he ever exhibited on the battlefield. He fell in love with the belle of Philadelphia, a young daughter of Edward Shippen, the richest merchant in the colony, and in order to win her, made the foolhardy venture of buying Mount Pleasant for her as a wedding present.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Mount Pleasant is said to have cost him \$100,000, and he paid for it with his personal note! The money he used for his running expenses he secured in any way possible, borrowing from every person of means crossing his path. It may be said in mitigation that Arnold had been a man of fortune at the outbreak of the Revolution; that he had converted every bit of property he possessed into money which he spent in outfitting his campaign against Canada. Congress being hard pressed financially, promised to reimburse him, and Arnold looked to Congress to make good this promise. But, in the meantime, powerful political enemies had arisen in that body, and they persistently refused to have him reimbursed. The result was that he was "left holding the sack" and became so harassed by his financial difficulties that it was impossible for one of his proud spirit and restless nature to endure them. But there was more back of his treason than this—a long record of glorious service to the flag, and an equally long record of injustice and insult at the hands of his enemies—a record which should cause us to blush with almost as much shame as his own defalcation.

In all the annals of military history there is no record of a man like Arnold. As an able general and fearless commander, he stood in the very forefront; as a leader of men in battle, he even surpassed Richard the Lion-Hearted; as a man, he is entitled, as much as anyone in history, to the title, "bravest of the brave"; as an organizer, disciplinarian, and tactician, he proved

MOUNT PLEASANT

himself to be among the best; as a popular idol, he even surpassed the great Washington. His one weakness was his fierce pride and his inability to control his own passions, which eventually drove him to seek revenge for his wrongs. This weak link in his character, this inability to control himself, sent him to his ruin.

At the outbreak of the war, he lived in New Haven, a former druggist who had made a fortune as a ship-owner and trader with the West Indies. He was captain of the Governor's Guards, and the instant the news of Lexington and Concord came, he was in a frenzy of excitement. A mass meeting on the Commons found him addressing the crowd and calling for volunteers to follow him. The next morning he left town with sixty men. Before he reached Boston, he had hit upon the daring scheme of attacking Fort Ticonderoga, that impregnable fortress on which England had spent more than ten million dollars. He received permission from the Massachusetts Council of Safety to undertake this project and was commissioned colonel. *Three days later*, he was 180 miles on his way. He soon learned that Ethan Allen was ahead of him; he caught up with him, showed his commission, and demanded command of the expedition, then prudently withdrew the demand and offered to serve as a volunteer with Allen. This he did and had the honor of marching through the gates of Ticonderoga side by side with Ethan Allen.

He then pushed on with fifty men to St. John's, took the garrison, captured a British sloop, destroyed five

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

batteaux, and captured four others. At this time his quarrel with Allen had reached Connecticut and that colony sided in with Allen, and a committee was sent by Massachusetts to investigate his conduct. Arnold was furious, saying with truth that he had been treated with injustice to have a committee inquiring into his *capacity* when no charges had been made against him. He resigned his command, discharged his men, who sided with him, and returned to Cambridge.

There, before he could secure a vindication, his restlessness threw him heart and soul into the projected Canadian invasion. A more daring project was never hazarded; no man save Arnold would have attempted it; none other could bring it to success. Imagine an invasion by boats and canoes of 1,100 men through two hundred miles of untrodden wilderness, with winter coming on, with incredible obstacles to overcome before they would have a *chance* to strike at the enemy! On one river they had to portage over seventeen falls, and at another place they carried their boats and artillery *on their backs* for fifteen miles and over a mountain range! Arnold was the genius who made this possible; ever he was present, leading his men on, remaining steadfast in spite of the desertion of whole companies.

The campaign ended in disaster, because of the treachery of an Indian guide who warned the unsuspecting inhabitants of Quebec so that they withdrew all their boats from one side of the river. Arnold was

MOUNT PLEASANT

delayed so long in crossing that he failed to take the town. Here, in a gallant charge, his leg was shattered, and he was carried back through the wilderness to St. John's but only after he had remained *all winter* around Quebec with 800 men giving siege.

We next find him on Lake Champlain in command of a little fleet where he fought a battle of tremendous odds against seventy-three ships, whereas he had only sixteen. Having no engineers on his own boat, he personally pointed his guns all day long. His boat was in the cross-fire of Indians on shore and the entire British fleet, but he refused to move. He was hulled twelve times. At one time he was the target of forty-four enemy guns. He continued the fight for four terrible hours, then made a daring sally, and escaped to a small creek where he beached his fleet, set fire to it, and sullenly disappeared in the forest. No example of greater personal bravery in a commander is known.

Arnold hurried to New Jersey, where he joined Washington just a week before the battle of Trenton, which turned the tide. But he was in camp only three days until he was ordered to Rhode Island. It was at this time that the first blow from Congress fell upon him. That body created five new major-generals without including him in the number. All of the promoted officers were his junior in rank. Arnold considered it an outrageous insult and determined to resign from the army; Washington wrote to him, begging him not to leave the service. Arnold's reply to Washington was

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the essence of nobility. He said: "Congress would undoubtedly have a right of promoting those whom, from their abilities and long and arduous services, they esteem most deserving. Their promoting junior officers to the rank of major-generals I view as a very civil way of requesting my resignation as unqualified for the office I hold. My commission was conferred unsolicited and received with pleasure only as a means of serving my country. With equal pleasure I resign when I can no longer serve my country with honor. The person who, void of the nice feelings of honor, will tamely condescend to give up his right, and retain a commission at the expense of his reputation, I hold as a disgrace to the army, and unworthy of the glorious cause in which we are engaged." He then requested a court of inquiry, and though feeling the ingratitude of his government, expressed a willingness to bleed as freely in its behalf as he had already done.

Washington demanded an explanation of Congress, but none of avail was given. Arnold then determined to visit Congress in person and seek vindication. On his way he passed through Connecticut, ran into a region lately burned by raiders, instantly forgot his wrongs, joined the militia and delivered a terrific blow to the enemy in a fight near Ridgefield. There his personal coolness saved him from being bayoneted, as he coolly sat on his dead horse and watched a Redcoat attempt to bayonet him. At the last instant he shot him dead and deliberately *walked* off the field.

MOUNT PLEASANT

This exploit made the country ring with his name; Congress then reluctantly gave him his title of major-general, but added insult to the injury by keeping him beneath the five juniors who had been promoted over his head. It might be well to look into the motives of Congress. There is no explanation for its conduct save that the dirty talons of corrupt politics held it in power. General Stark—he of “Molly Stark” fame—was similarly treated and promptly left the army. Never again did he serve except with the New Hampshire militia. Robert Morris, Baron von Steuben, and others were given inducements and contracts by Congress, which were never honored. Morris gave his personal fortune to save the country and died in a debtor’s prison; von Steuben died in poverty on a frontier claim in New York; Arnold was driven to treason.

Washington again prevented him from resigning; a hearing was held, Arnold was vindicated, but Congress still withheld his right. Washington then sent Arnold to help Gates in his contest with Burgoyne. Gates was vain, proud, conceited, and ambitious. He resented Arnold’s presence, and finally ordered him to stay in his tent. This was a stinging sentence for as active and restless a genius as Arnold, and a blow to his pride, as Gates was one of the juniors promoted over his head.

Suffice it to say that at Saratoga Arnold contrived to get away from his tent and onto the battlefield; his conduct there is proof of the assertion that he evidently intended to get himself killed and end his career. He

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

was everywhere; time and again he and his black horse, Warren, rode the length of the field in the cross-fire of the two armies! Since Gates always stayed in his tent during a battle, Arnold's presence on the field made him commander-in-chief and naturally his orders were obeyed. His men would have followed him through the fires of hell that day, and he *personally* won the day, against tremendous odds. Gates, however, never mentioned his name or let Congress know in his report that it was Arnold's division that carried the day.

It was here, in the gathering dusk of evening, that he received a second wound in his shattered leg and was carried off the field, as he was preparing to storm Burgoyne's camp, having driven him from the battlefield proper. It was his last battle under our flag.

Other charges were made against him, other insults heaped upon him until, at Philadelphia, he waited eighteen months to be brought to trial on them. He was vindicated every time, save the last time when he was censured. And his unhappy nature, spurred on by pride and an ungovernable passion for revenge, drove him to treason. And so his shining star went down behind the clouds of infamy and disgrace.

Mount Pleasant, his home at Philadelphia, is owned by the city today and is in a wonderful state of preservation. There is no furniture in the house; only the bare walls, wide hallways, and ample staircases, where one wanders aimlessly, seeking the strange spell which

MOUNT PLEASANT

it has exerted over every individual ever owning it, for of the six or seven people claiming title to it, every one has come to an untimely end. Some lost their fortunes; one, the Spanish ambassador, committed suicide; and Arnold planned his treason within its walls.

The doors at Mount Pleasant are not open to the general public. I understand that it is possible to secure permission from the authorities at the City Hall, and upon presenting the proper credentials to the caretaker you will be admitted. I happened to go to Mount Pleasant the first time in the spring, however, when the woodwork and walls were being repainted. The workmen very kindly permitted me to step inside and imagine, if I might through the turpentine and white lead, how it looked in those gay, colorful days of plum waistcoats and clanking swords.

In the picture you will notice the wide, generous steps and the iron railings. Notice also the fine doorways. The front doorway at Mount Pleasant is said to be one of the best examples of outstanding colonial architectural beauty now left in the country. That door has been copied again and again in this country.

A hall runs through the house from front to back—and it should be remembered that the driveway entrance is at the rear of the house, the front facing on the Schuylkill River. It is a wide hall, a typical colonial hall, and on either side are the customary two rooms. A staircase is to the left of the hall, as you enter from the driveway, somewhat of a variation from many

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

colonial halls. This staircase is one of the largest and widest that I have ever seen in old mansions. It was built for gay throngs.

The rooms are hard to visualize as they were in the old day, minus their furniture and hangings. The woodwork is white throughout, and the fireplaces small and neat, like those at Mount Vernon. There are two main floors, and access may be had to the third floor where several rooms are to be found—doubtless used as additional guest-rooms or as servant quarters. These are lighted by the dormer windows seen in the picture.

I could not help but wonder, as I stood on the front steps shown in the picture, in that wonderful old colonial doorway, and looked out across the old garden and over the Schuylkill to the hills beyond, if Arnold had ever given that beauty spot a chance to heal his wounds. What might the history of his name have been if he had walked in these old paths and tugged at lilac bloom or the roses which once flourished there? What, aye, what a difference might have been made if he had donned the gardener's clothes and taken a spade or a trowel and gone digging and planting in his own garden!

Traces of the beauty of that spot still remain; it was there ready to serve him, but he saw it not. Rather, he turned in upon himself and contemplated his wrongs until even his own brilliant mind was driven down into the depths. How often man, by his false sense of the importance of things, gets into a mire of difficulty!

MOUNT PLEASANT

Our sadness in reviewing the unseemly ending of his career is not grounded in a soft sentimentality so much as it is in genuine regret that so marvelous an ability in so many departments of human endeavor should fall so hopelessly through a single defect in its makeup.

Arnold's fierce pride and his failure to avoid the pitfalls it laid for him show the depths to which a diseased mind can plunge a man who turns to seek revenge. And, in addition, he forgot Old John Brown's injunction that patience is the most important lesson "young men" need to learn. The ability to wait, to bide one's time! Things tend to correct themselves when they get out of joint, and those who recognize this have a great scourge placed in their hands. Often they need nothing more to rout and confound their enemies.

Had he waited but a year, had he faced his extravagances and his debts with half the resolution and courage that he faced his enemies on the field of battle—what a difference there might be in our history! He is not especially to be condemned for his faint-heartedness—even Washington wrote in that year to his friend Mason that "all seemed to be lost"—but Washington hung on, stood to the mark, and in the turn of events landed on top as such men always do.

It is, perhaps, just as well. The mills of the gods grind exceedingly slow and they turn not aside for any man. The fire that warms us will, the moment we get out of proper relation to it, as readily consume us. Pride is a useful quality in its proper place; it leads men to

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the heights, leads them to make the most of themselves and of their opportunities—but it is a fire, nevertheless. Let it get out of bounds and, like the fire, it, too, will consume us.

We turn from Mount Pleasant as from a cursed thing; we leave it in sadness and in sorrow. We cannot appreciate its beauty or thrill at its architecture; we hurry as if pursued by its insidious spell. We would that we might sing its praises, and honor the man who once dwelt within its halls; but the challenge of his perfidy everywhere stares us in the face. So it must be with those who are tried and found wanting, with those who have not yet learned to subdue self.

·

CHAPTER IX

ELIZA HOUSE AT RIPLEY, OHIO

ELIZA HOUSE

IT IS hard to say what are the most important hours in our lives. Some would claim that the great hours were when some public attention has come to them; others, searching for a time when they were in the limelight, would say that they had had no great hours, or had done no great deeds.

But our sense of the importance of things is often challenged by the subsequent march of events, challenged so forcibly as to give point to the assertion that, after all, the things we do every day as we go about the business of living are the important things. These drab acts in a humdrum world color and shape our destinies, and sometimes they color and shape the fate of whole nations.

Helen of Troy stoops to flirt a bit and her coquetry shakes the very foundations of the whole ancient world and destroys a great civilization so utterly that we are in doubt as to the exact place where it stood. A strain of diseased thinking crops out in Brutus and he lays his benefactor out under an assassin's knife. A lowly slave woman, living somewhere south of the Ohio River prior to the year 1850, cherishes a mother love so real and intense that she does not propose to have her family separated at the auction-block, as had been the custom. And so they, she and her husband, agree to slip, one at a time, "over the hills to freedom."

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

That decision, coming to fruition in the minds of two simple slaves, without education or learning, unschooled and untaught, marks the beginning of the end of slavery. For in their whispered determination were born the events which aroused the North and drove home to it hatred for slavery, and this, in turn, loosened the sparks that brought on a civil war. "Great oaks from little acorns grow."

Fifty-odd miles east and south of Cincinnati, on the north bank of the Ohio—in reality a stiff upper lip of a high bluff—is the town of Ripley. It was here that a great business was done in the days of river shipping; it was here that General Grant went to an academy in his youth, and here that he came to take a steamboat to West Point; it was here that Senator Alexander Campbell lived, who was a former slave-holder in Virginia, but freed his slaves and became a staunch Abolitionist; and, perhaps more important of all, it was here that Rev. John Rankin came in 1821, preaching anti-slavery through Tennessee and Kentucky, and finally locating his house on the thousand-foot bluff towering above Ripley. It became, so the legend runs, "a fortress by day and a beacon-light by night, lighting the way to freedom."

Rev. John Rankin, a typical old-time circuit preacher who took his religion strong, sowed the seeds of slavery's dissolution. He, more than any other man, should be given the credit for bringing about the downfall of that iniquitous institution, for he first dared to oppose it.



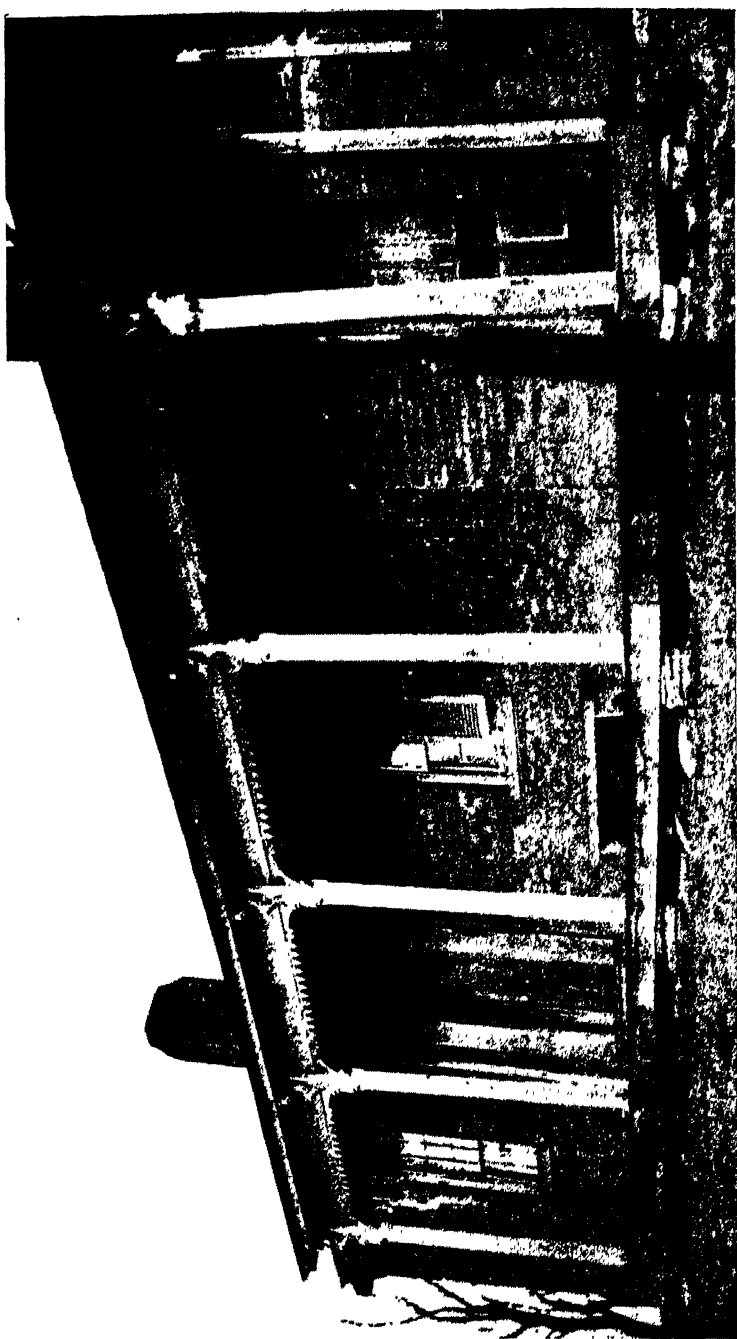


PLATE IX. Eliza House, where Harriet Beecher Stowe met the Negress, "Eliza."

ELIZA HOUSE

His fiery eloquence early made Ripley the very center of Abolitionism, and so hateful did the doctrine seem that it was more than thirty years before any man in public life dared openly to favor it.

The Rev. Mr. Rankin sought to inflame the people by means of exhortation against the institution he considered contrary to his religious and political beliefs. But exhortation is not the substance of great reform movements; it is merely the leaven that makes the whole loaf possible.

Few reformers do, single-handed, accomplish their aim. For every Messiah there is always a John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness. The Rev. Mr. Rankin and William Lloyd Garrison were the prophets crying out in the wilderness of indifference and antagonism; Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe was the subtler genius who put across what they were trying to do. The former came with accusation and direct challenge, offering no quarter, appealing to men's passions instead of their reason, sowing strife, and getting it for their pains; Mrs. Stowe, with her "Uncle Tom's Cabin," did the neatest bit of propaganda ever seen in our history. She knew, as a talented writer, the surest way to men's hearts; she knew the all-powerful force that sympathy is, and she used it with telling effect.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" is not all fiction. Mrs. Stowe herself vigorously defended it by publishing a book in which she set out all the data and documents upon which she based the story. "Uncle Tom" was a real

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

character, Josiah Herndon, whom Mrs. Stowe had known in her Cincinnati days when a teacher in her father's school. "Eliza" was a real character, and it is also a fact that she crossed on the floating cakes of ice ahead of her master's dogs, as recited in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and was hidden in the Rev. Rankin's house on the hill-top, which house is the subject of this sketch.

I know there are those who doubt this, even deny it. But there are those who claim that Paul Revere never existed, yet in Boston one can visit his home, see dozens of articles that he made, and read the story of his famous ride that he wrote himself before a notary—yes, he decorated the dome of the state-house of Massachusetts.

The negress, Eliza, also existed in real life; almost everyone in Ripley will tell you so and point to the house on the hill, and tell you the story. One or two denied it to me, but I thought they only showed themselves to be the exceptions proving the rule.

Mrs. Stowe heard whispered about the story of Eliza's flight across the ice, and she came to Ripley and visited the young slave girl in "the house on the hill" while Eliza was still hidden there in the chamber under the roof.

Here was copy for you! Romance, heart interest, pathos, plot—all. No writer—and Harriet Beecher Stowe had been writing some five or six years as a side-line—could resist it. From thinking of it, it grew into "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Need it be said that Harriet

ELIZA HOUSE

Beecher Stowe was an enthusiastic Abolitionist? And her exhibit in the trial of slavery before the bar of public opinion proved the most effective evidence of all.

Ripley hasn't changed much, I dare say, since those days in the '40's when the "Underground Railroad" flourished. The wheezy old ferry-boat still uncertainly churns at the yellow current of the Ohio, and the old buildings lean protectingly against the hill.

Before I went to Ripley, I used to thrill at the thought of Eliza crossing the floating ice; now I have found a far more sensible thing to thrill at—I wonder how she ever managed to make the top of the hill to the Rev. Mr. Rankin's house. I have mentioned the bluff upon which it rests.

This bluff is a thousand feet above the river and its sides are almost perpendicular. One-third of the way up, you pause all out of breath, warm under the collar, even though it is a blustering March day, and turn around to note the town nestled under your feet like an Alpine village, *but the real ascent starts here!* There are one hundred stone steps to climb, and in one place you pull yourself up hand over hand, clinging to a wire fence. Eliza went up that hill with her precious babe in her arms, *after* crossing the river. Doubtless, she could hear the hounds baying in the darkness on the other side, and it is suggested that the chill terror they inspire in the hunted will compel one to overcome almost any obstacle.

I could see her, the summit gained, rushing around

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the side of the house, slipping on the rude stepping-stones, chilled to the bone from the raw February wind that struck her in the face, gaining the sanctuary of the back door, all but falling into the simple kitchen—terror in her black eyes, her flesh aquiver under the strain; I could see her reluctantly surrender her babe to sympathetic hands, eagerly swallow the hot drink pressed upon her as she dried herself before the fire. Gradually, the noise of the hounds died away in the distance as they were called off, and then calm came. Then she was led to the little room upstairs and, for the first night of her life, slept the sleep of freedom, her babe clutched to her breast. How often she must have looked back upon that night as her life ran on to the end!

Eliza House is a modest brick structure a story and a half in height, of a type common a century ago. For more than that time it has been the brunt of rain and storm on the windswept hill. A modest farm lies to the rear, where the Rev. Mr. Rankin produced the necessities of life in the intervals between his preaching. The house stands aloof from the other houses in Ripley, spread out below, symbolic of the loftiness of purpose and ideals which formed Rankin's ruling passion in life. Like an outpost, it frowned upon the hills of Kentucky, alone and apart in its earlier days in its cause, as it now is, in fact.

No love of beauty is reflected in its terse structure. Only two or three trees stand by its side on the big

ELIZA HOUSE

plain; there is no hint of gardens save a tiger lily bed in one corner. It is almost sullen in its stern deadliness of purpose—somewhat expressive of the sullen tenacity of the man who spent more than a quarter of a century under its roof.

But the fierce fires that have held it together no longer fuse it into a stern and hardened whole. It dreams of its past, like an old hound sometimes frowning with ferocious intent, but the chase and the game are long since done. Its fibers are disintegrating, slipping, falling back into the soil.

There was, I thought, a touch of pathos in the embarrassment of the young farmer's wife who showed me about the place. She was conscious of its infirmities and sorry I had caught her so, hastening to explain that they had had a bit of hard luck, otherwise they would not be living "in such a place!" When I walked on the creaking floors, groaning with age, and saw her efforts to tidy up the place and make it look presentable, I did not blame her.

But the old house has given its youth and its maturity in sheltering those who have had a "bit of hard luck." Humble and modest as its shelter has been, plain and drab and severe as its outlook may be, still it has gone down the years under an uncalculated load of service to the friendless and the poverty-stricken.

Great as its service of love has been, there is still a trace of the hate it once bore, indicative of an age when virtue was looked upon as a "cross," and happiness and

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

joy something severe and stern. There is no relaxation in the old fortress, and there will be none until death overtakes it and it is no more. I thought the single bed of flowers—*tiger* lilies—but accented the grim note of the place. No softening influence, no lighter touches, no relief. Just the eternal moan of the wind and the inevitable settling of the old battlements, lonely and forlorn as they have come to be, into the past.

We come away, feeling that it is one of the real landmarks in our history, even though it has been ignored by a busy world.

.

CHAPTER X

THE HOME OF EMERSON

.



PLATE X. Emerson's home at Concord. Here he spent the best years of his life.

THE HOME OF EMERSON

IT IS remarkable that in a world where there is so much beauty and happiness and pleasure for the asking, where all are occupied, if only in their idleness, that we should pause now and then and demand to know whither we are going; what principles control us in our work and play; what Schemer has devised this emotion or that sweet-scented violet; this beauty of face, that ugliness of wretched penalty.

Every soul lives, strives, and struggles to fulfil its highest destiny. No man seeks to be less than himself in his saner moments. Everywhere there is a restless search for divinity. Goods no longer interest the wise; the cultured think in terms of service rather than in terms of the classics, and the poets of the world today are the manufacturers. Why should Emerson ever have had a hearing? His style was so ponderous, so hard to fathom at times that we often say had he lived in this day he would have starved to death unnoticed. But this is a glib estimate. Had there been no Emerson, there would be no today—and if he were just looming on the horizon, we would be living in a world we know not. His influence on the times is so deeply marked that no weathering has effaced it, or ever can. It wears like the milled edge on a gold eagle, enduring until the face of time is rubbed off.

He is as eternal as the stars because he grounded

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

himself in principles. And, as William Jennings Bryan once observed, principles are eternal. Emerson is not read by the rank and file because of his literary style, but in spite of it. He is read for the pure gold of his incisive thought—because he preached a philosophy of which the world was in sore need. The pity is that we sometimes have to spend a lifetime finding out just what he meant. Like the Carpenter of Galilee, he spoke in allusion and figures. But he is the least careless of speech of our modern writers. Words were “hard as cannon balls” to him, and he hoarded his ammunition, striving to make each shot tell. At times, he is careful to develop his thought in great perfection of detail; we grasp him easily and fancy ourselves on the threshold of a great awakening of light—then, he skips lightly from place to place, offering no connectives, no sign-boards pointing the way, and we flounder hopelessly as in the mire. Every brooding thought is a terror, and panic chases us out of his virgin heights. If we are as persistent in our search for Truth as he was, we come out in the end just where he did.

Emerson is not profound because he is so much above us in mental reach; he is truly profound because he reveals to us simple truths of conduct which appeal tremendously to the reason. His fancy is as deceitful of reason as the multiplication table, or the flight of time. Both are inevitable. It is only where we fail to measure up to our full stature as men and women that we disagree or fail to catch his eternal truth.

THE HOME OF EMERSON

To Emerson we owe much of the orderliness of our very complex modern commercial society. I was almost tempted to say "industrial" society, but in the industrial sense we are reverting to an earlier ancestry, just as in the animal world there are "throwbacks" in response to the law of atavism. For Emerson ever stood for individualism; on the other hand, our industrialism is going back to masses, classes, blocs.

Commercial, however, is the word. It symbolizes a degree of individualism and in the business world it still holds water. To this individual world Emerson gave his famous law of compensation which has done much to render modern society efficient and orderly. He taught us to adopt the price system in our daily affairs—that public office, this great business; that promotion, this power; that responsibility, this duty; that wealth, this charity—all have their price as well as the coat on our backs or the groceries we consume.

He taught us that we cannot escape our debts under this law, and he drives home the truth of it with remorseless logic. When we begin to work on that basis—to know that we are paying for everything we get, every fancied privilege or right, in current coin—we begin to stand to the scratch and face the music as men. We commence to measure up, to fulfil the destiny that is within us. When no avenue of escape lies open, men commonly wage the superb fight.

We acquire a new sense of obligation, not only to ourselves but to our fellowmen. We cannot take

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

advantage of our neighbor unless we cheat ourselves—and if we cheat ourselves we have injured every life touching our own. We have started a run on the social bank and only time can count the losses.

Unlike the average philosopher, his theories were workable; they were rooted in common experience; they were wholesomely sound on their face; they required no defense to gain them currency. Thus he says in his *Compensation*, "The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House. It has commonly cost him his peace and the best of his manly attributes." Again: "A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will or against his will he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. . . . You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong." And again: "The borrower runs in his own debt. . . . There arises on the deed the instant acknowledgment of benefit on the one part and of debt on the other; that is, of superiority and inferiority. The transaction remains in the memory of himself and his neighbor; and every new transaction alters, according to its nature, their relation to each other."

Some have commented on the underlying theme of his writings and of his lectures, attaching religious significance to them far beyond what Emerson ever intended. I believe Emerson had a theme, but I am not prepared to admit that it concerned itself entirely

THE HOME OF EMERSON

with the spiritual. His theme, his religion, his passion, his eternal subject, was Prudence. It colors and tints and shapes everything he ever touched. It is his purpose, his excuse for utterance. He strove manfully to bring it to everyone within the hearing of his voice, and he lifted his voice with all the power his lungs possessed. He wrote an essay on Prudence, and he thus speaks of it: "Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outmost action of the inward life. It is God taking thought for the oxen." Then again: "Prudence does not go behind nature, and ask, whence is it? It takes the laws of the world whereby man's being is conditioned, as they are, and keeps these laws, that they may enjoy their proper good. . . . Do what we can, summer will have its flies. If we walk in the woods, we must feed mosquitoes. If we go fishing, we must expect a wet coat. . . . We are instructed by these petty experiences which usurp the hours and the years."

His passion was for facts, the truth. He cared not what idols, what creeds he might crush or overturn in his search. But he was gentle in his exposure of the established order. He respected the intelligence of others and their respect for institutions. Where Ingersoll rushed in with a club and took savage delight in wrecking everything in sight or reach, Emerson was more prudent and more effective. He quietly reasoned one out into the purer and clearer air. Finding that he could no longer conscientiously agree with the theology

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

of his day, Emerson quietly leaves his pastorate and retires to his own study. He had no desire to destroy what he could no longer use. He was a new kind of a crusader; he fought with subtler weapons. Ingersoll got hatred without stint, national antagonism without measure, and more or less of an unfair odium is attached to his name even in this day; whereas Emerson was elevated to the highest pinnacle of fame and is universally accepted for his work. Ingersoll was driven out of respectable homes, whereas Emerson was taken bodily into our schools and is taught to our children. Yet, in religion or theology, they stood on common ground.

To visit the home of Emerson is a great experience. It is worth while to visit a battlefield where great issues have hung by the fling of Fate; to see the spot where a few sturdy Pilgrims have first touched foot, in the dead of winter, upon a bleak and wind-swept shore, is well worth while; but to visit a spot where great thoughts have leapt full-armed from a responsive brain, inspires a humble scribe with a type of awe impossible to describe. It brings one face to face with the eternal majesty of the mind, that most mysterious and, at the same time, most apparent force we have in this life. We know in the end, as we stare at these walls, these windows, these shelves of books, these floors, not unlike thousands of others the country over, that there is no unraveling the great secret of mind. Outwardly it is as common as so many shoes, so many horses, so many

THE HOME OF EMERSON

coats. We look upon the faces about us, and we do not know what power, what height, and breadth and depth lie behind the eyes. But in the books, in the quiet of our study, we can come to know the writer-mind better than it knows itself.

Emerson's house at Concord is a substantial farmhouse, situated four or five blocks from the town Common on the Lexington road. Within a stone's throw of its front door passed Major Pitcairn and his redcoats on that memorable morning in April, 1775. They had just finished their bloody work at Lexington. In an hour or two, they were to meet defeat at Concord bridge. Just up the winding road, as it skirts the great hill, lay the Common and Wright's Tavern, where Major Pitcairn was to slake his thirst with a whiskey toddy and make his boast about stirring Yankee blood as he stirred his toddy.

I mention these trifles because the Rev. William Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson's grandfather, was at that moment quietly at work in his study on the north edge of the town. His window overlooked Concord bridge, and on two sides the road skirted his place, which later came to be known as "The Old Manse," where both Emerson and Hawthorne started their literary careers. Emerson's grandfather stood in the window of his study and watched the whole fight, greatly exaggerated in our histories, as only three British were killed and one Minute Man. But things grow as the story is told again and again, and young

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Ralph Waldo often heard it from his grandfather's lips as he sat on the old gentleman's knee.

And the lad passed on to the world its message in the first bit of writing to bring him nation-wide fame. You are all familiar with at least one stanza of it:

By the rude bridge that arched the flood
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

When Emerson was first struggling with the urge to express himself, he lived at "The Old Manse" for a time, and it was there that he wrote his first work, his essay on Nature. This is considered by many good judges to be the most important of his essays, although it has never gained the currency his Compensation, Friendship, Love, or Self-Reliance have. Some of his poems are more universally known than even his essays.

Later he moved to the house which is the subject of this sketch, and here the greater part of his life was lived. His property consisted of four to five acres of ground, flanking the road, with an irregular brook in the rear. He had a generous lawn and vegetable-garden on one side and a flower-garden in the rear. Elms and pines still linger behind him. His house was as large and commodious as any in Concord; it is not unlike many others one sees there. There was no hint at ostentation or show. It is plain, substantial, and betokens solid comfort. His study overlooked the driveway and the lawn.

THE HOME OF EMERSON

We know, as we look back at this comfortable home place, something of the love for it which prompted him to write that "traveling is the fool's paradise." We know something of the place home had in his being when we read his poem under the somewhat commonplace title of "Farewell, Proud World, Farewell." While Emerson apologizes for his garden many times in his writings, it must have been an important part in his life. As Ellis Parker Butler points out in one of his screeds, the garden is the one place where a thinker can have a fair chance to work at his trade. Emerson probably was not a model gardener—few writers are—but while the weeds undoubtedly overran it at times, it served, nevertheless, the more important duty of keeping his mental garden-patch free of them. Of course, the thrifty farmers around Concord joked about it, nudging each other as they passed his place, or, less discreetly, brought the subject directly to his attention, else Emerson would not have mentioned the weeds in his gardens so many times. One of the sure confessions of inferiority is to make fun of the other fellow because he lacks something you have.

But times change. Now we go half-way across the continent to visit his garden. We hurry through Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, not noticing the graves of those who laughed at him and thought him "queer" because he didn't raise corn and cattle, but sat and dreamed under his elm trees throughout the precious haying-time. At last we stand before his grave in mute

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

homage. Here the great of the world have come and talked in low tones of his influence upon their lives; here men have wept in thankfulness that he had lived before them!

The world yet needs the thinker. He is the explorer who brings whole continents into our lives. He constantly revises the geography of the mind, extending the boundaries of the horizon, subduing the untrodden fastnesses of the unknown, making way for mental and spiritual expansion.

Often he lives a life of sad neglect. He has ever to compete with the groceries and politics and dollars with which we clutter our lives; he is forced to use the weapons a materialistic world drops in his lap; his leisure is gained only after he has paid tribute in current coin.

Now and then a real thinker breaks asunder the economic bonds that hem him in. Like bolts of lightning, he strikes first in this direction and that, his flashes illuminating the whole gloomy landscape. And we venture a little farther away from the old traditions, the old heresies, the old cramped institutions. Thus progress comes to us, bit by bit, step by step, mite by mite.

Emerson was a real thinker. We are today squatters in the new realms of fertile soil he explored and charted for us. Almost everywhere we turn we discover his lonely footprints. He has been there ahead of us. Our debt to him is universal, and if we know him not, our lives are bound to be stunted and dwarfed.

·

CHAPTER XI

ARLINGTON, THE HOME OF
ROBERT E. LEE

·

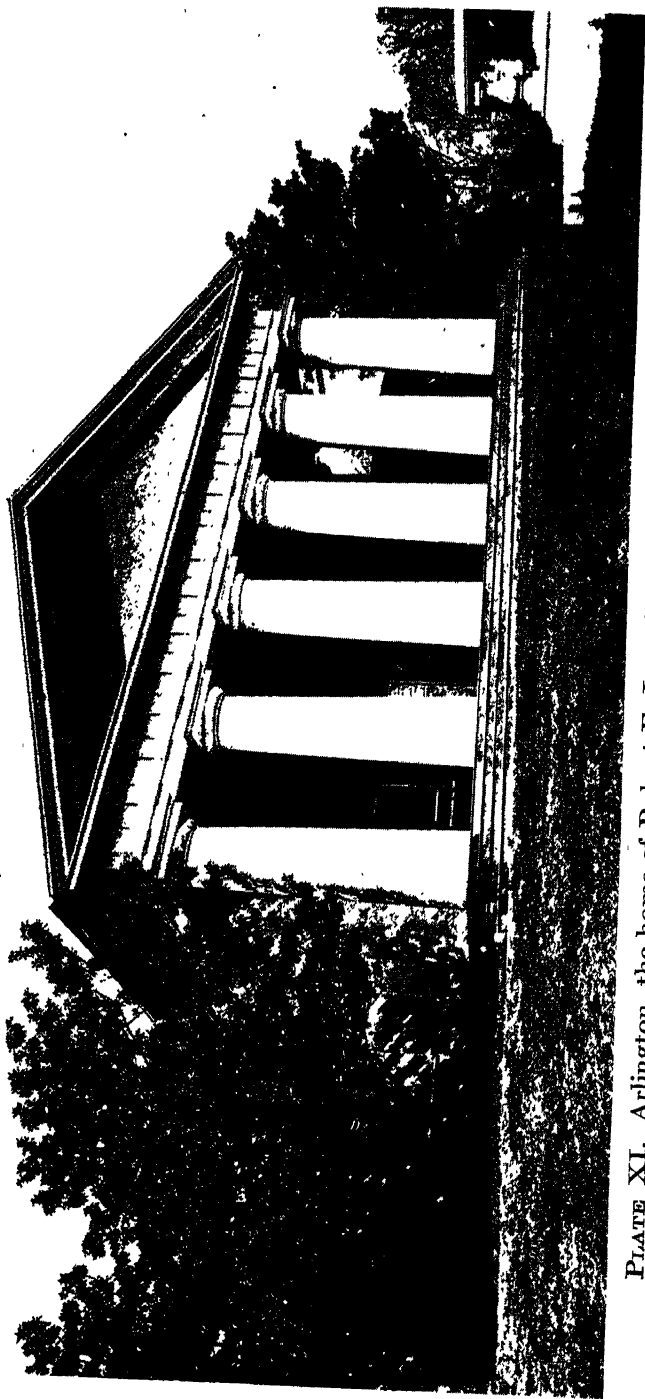


PLATE XI. Arlington, the home of Robert E. Lee. "One can see the Doric columns of the mansion house from all parts of the historic plains of Washington."

ARLINGTON

ACROSS the lazy Potomac, nestling in the Virginia hills opposite the city of Washington, is Arlington, long famous as the home of Robert E. Lee. The traveler in our national city can see the Doric columns of the mansion house from all parts of the historic plains of Washington. It has nestled in those hills, two hundred feet above the river, since 1802, when it was built by George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of Washington. I think I shall never forget my visit to Arlington. Not because of the "row on row" of stones marking the thirty-odd thousand of our soldier and sailor dead buried there; not so much because it was the home of Custis or of Lee, but because of the native beauty of the place. The deep ravines, the wide sweeping ranks of the great majestic trees, the dip from the bluffs overlooking the river, the view over the city of Washington; these combined create an impression which only the long years and a failing memory can ever erase.

There is a grace and an appeal about Arlington quite unlike that of any other famous home we have ever visited, and that grace and charm lie more in the trees and the surroundings, with their romantic historical associations, perhaps, than in anything else. The mansion house, built on the plan of a temple at Athens, while magnificent and mighty in itself, is not altogether

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

convincing. There is a bit of suggestion of being overdone. The great, massive columns in front are much too massive and prominent to appeal to us in an architectural sense today. If one drops down near the front door to drink in the wonderful view which is presented, they seem to spoil it all—they are so big and massive. They seem to get into their own way and keep you from seeing half the beauty of the panorama.

While Arlington is deeply suggestive of the Greek influence from the front, there is no suggestion of it whatever in the view from the rear of the house, or on the inside. This may or may not be disappointing to the traveler, depending upon the viewpoint one carries.

There is just one other feature which is bound to prove disappointing to the visitor, and that is the entire absence of any of the furnishings which once adorned this great house. It is bare of furniture or of hangings today. We can only wander about, somewhat at a loss to fill in the picture, as we did at Mount Pleasant, the home of Benedict Arnold. It takes but slight imagination, at that, to conjure up pictures of what these high ceilings in their light tan flat wall finish have seen in their day. Here George Washington Parke Custis held undisputed sway through the fifty-five years that he ruled the social destinies of Old Virginia and the capital city. Here some of the most brilliant events of the times were held. Here Lafayette was entertained for a time on his memorable visit, and it was on the front steps that he paid tribute to the view, saying it

ARLINGTON

was the most wonderful his eyes had ever rested upon. The commodious room just to the left of the hall as we enter, is where General Lee paced back and forth all night long early in April, 1861, his soul torn in agony as he slowly came to a decision to cast his lot with Virginia and the South.

That alone is sufficient to fill the room with lively romance. I am sure that the fine regard which we all have for Lee, however great it might be before we go to Arlington, is always much enhanced when we stand in that room and the setting where he solved his great problem is vividly before our eyes. The decision Lee made that morning, just as the sun was peeping over the rim of the Maryland hills to the east, more eloquently expresses the character of the man than anything else history offers us. But more of that later.

To really appreciate the beauty of Arlington as the home of Lee, one must get outside again, under the trees. I have never seen such wonderful trees anywhere as there are at Arlington. The great oaks, especially those in the ravine immediately behind the old kitchen to the rear of the mansion house, are as tall and clean of trunk as the old white pines in the original Wisconsin country. I saw them early in the spring when the leaves had not yet appeared. I can only marvel at what their beauty must be when in full dress.

Two of the original outbuildings in the rear of Arlington are still standing. One of these was used as a kitchen where all the cooking was done, as was

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

customary in the early southern mansions; the other doubtless housed the servants.

I have before me a picture of Arlington taken in Civil War times. It shows a file of soldiers on guard near the front steps. Aside from this bit of war-time color, and the absence of the paved driveway now in front of the steps, Arlington looks today as it did in those stirring times. I can note but slight difference in some of the trees between then and now.

Arlington never really "belonged" to Lee in the sense many people would suppose. It was the birthplace and the life-long home of Lee's wife until the fortunes of war forced her to flee to Richmond with her husband.

Here Lee came as a boy to romp and play through the great parks and lawns with Mary Ann Randolph Custis, the only child of the Arlington household. Those who knew them then have testified to the great comradeship between them, and the good fun they had in those play hours under the trees. Mary Ann was a lively, happy, typical Southern girl. Her personality has long been obscured by that of her husband, but aside from her healthy love for play as a girl, there is another scrap of historical fact upon which we can form a more accurate estimate of her character.

Her father had planned for her to marry a rich man. The match made for her must be worthy her station and wealth. And, indeed, she was a prize worthy for a king! Beautiful, talented, good-natured, and sincere, she was worthy the highest parental aspirations.

ARLINGTON

Mary Ann had fallen in love with her old pal of childhood days. That settled that! What mattered it if he were a poor boy? Didn't she love him? Wasn't his family as old and honorable and as proud as hers? Wasn't he a Prince Charming? Didn't he take care of his invalid mother through the years with a tenderness and solicitude that brought assurance to one's heart?

Arguments might be made in vain. Young Lee had been appointed to West Point, and while parents might hope that his long absence would wean away the youthful heart, they did not reason correctly in this case. In time, he returned home a full-fledged second lieutenant, all aglitter in bright brass buttons and the funniest headgear you ever saw on a soldier, but that settled it between them. Two years dragged by, in which the young officer was stationed at Hampton Roads, building fortifications, but a day came in June (1831) when he returned on leave and they were quietly married.

For nearly thirty years Lee's family continued to live at Arlington. Custis died in 1857 and left a life estate in it to his daughter, and upon her death the estate was to pass on to his grandson, George Washington Custis Lee. But long before this time the practical management of the great estate of 1,100 acres had rested in Robert E. Lee. History records that under his management the estate constantly grew in productiveness and value, even though decay was beginning to assail many of the other old estates in the vicinity. Most of this

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

time Lee was many weary miles away from it and the family he loved so dearly, as during his service in building coast defenses, in the West and South on the frontier, and in the war with Mexico.

It was at Appomattox that the ragged, hungry army of northern Virginia was hemmed in on all sides. A last desperate effort, led by the youthful and fiery Gordon and the intrepid Fitzhugh Lee, had failed to cut a way through the tightening grip of the ranks of blue.

"Then, there is only one thing for me to do," said General Lee, calmly, "and that is to see General Grant."

"But, General, what will history say to the surrender of an army in the field?"

"Of course, they will not understand how we were overpowered by numbers and reduced by famine, but that is not the question, Colonel. The question is, is it right for me to surrender this army? If it is right, I'll take all the responsibility."

The rest is history. A day or two later, as General Lee turned back toward Richmond alone on "Traveler," his white horse, he was wildly cheered all the way by the boys in blue through whose lines he passed. Alone! And cheered! What other "rebel" in all history might have done such a thing?

The explanation lies in the sterling honesty which General Lee constantly exhibited throughout his entire career. Again and again he was willing "to take the

ARLINGTON

responsibility" for results which were not strictly his fault. While a very considerable portion of our people have disagreed with the conclusion he reached when it came time to decide between the North and the South, no one has ever arisen to challenge the honesty of his reasoning and the manner in which he reached that conclusion. Given the same temperament and the same training, his decision to go with the South was inevitable.

It is not difficult to find an explanation for the wonderfully sweet and tender nature of this man. He was the third son of "Light-Horse" Harry Lee, the famous cavalry leader under Washington. While still a very young boy, Lee's father's health gave way and it was necessary for him to go to the West Indies in an effort to ward off death. Lee's mother was a confirmed invalid and her care fell upon the young boy. For many years, indeed until he reached manhood's estate, he was his mother's constant nurse and companion.

She was one of God's noblewomen and in her hands the character of the son became as clay in the hands of the potter. His studies were left to private tutors, but his constant association with his mother imbued his spirit with a sort of feminine grace which followed him throughout the years.

His playground was the old city of Alexandria, steeped to the brim in historical tradition and background. Here Washington's own hand could be seen everywhere; here Braddock had come and made his

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

headquarters before his disastrous campaign; here, at Christ Church, Lee had worshipped. You can still see his pew just to the rear and across the aisle from the one occupied by Washington.

If ever the Old South had in its manhood an exponent of chivalry, it is Robert E. Lee. We have no record of a single stain, blemish, or spot on his name or character. There is no record of misused power or disregard for the rights or feelings of others; indeed, history has often tried to make out a record of mistake in his military career, but this, too, has failed in the light of other considerations.

Lee's military career is, I suppose, familiar to all. Certainly, the history of the Civil War in its major operations as it concerns the South is largely the history of his influence as a military genius. He was the only Southern leader to prove again and again that he was not only the equal, but often the superior, of the officers sent against him. Bragg, Johnston, Hood, Beauregard, and the others sent to hold the West, fell before their antagonists and were constantly pressed back. Lee not only swept down for nearly four years every general sent to oppose him, but he actually cut three generals to pieces in three single battles. McClellan, Hooker, Burnside, and Meade were all discarded because they did not prove to be his match. It took Grant and his "hammering policy" to lay him low. And Grant operated at a tremendous advantage because of two facts: (1) He had the experience of the

ARLINGTON

failures of those before him to guide him, and (2) he had complete command over the whole army and could move it in unison. It took 1864 and Sherman to make Petersburg and Appomattox possible.

Which detracts not one whit from the lustre of Grant's name, but emphasizes, I trust, the fact that General Lee was no military accident. His service in the army, even as a young man, was sufficiently brilliant to cause General Scott to make a special request that Lee be sent from his frontier post to join him in Mexico as his chief of staff. There Lee distinguished himself as an engineer and planted the batteries which caused the capture of Mexico City. But his service in keeping peace between the testy and vainglorious Scott and his subordinates was none the less valuable in that campaign.

When the dark clouds of war hovered over the land in that memorable spring of 1861, General Scott was still in command of the army. He was too old to actively take the field, and a canvass was made for someone to fill his shoes. Most of the brilliant officers were flocking to the standards of the South. It is said that General Scott offered to recommend Lee for the place if he would stay with the colors. It is known that much of Lee's agony of soul that night in the big room at Arlington was due to this offer.

Lee was no politician. All his training and his traditions had been with the South. Virginia was to him his mother government. His people were Virginians,

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

his soul and fiber and being Virginian. On the other hand, he had sworn allegiance to the flag; he had been offered the supreme command of the army—certainly a temptation to any soldier; and he had the material welfare of his family to consider. Arlington belonged to his wife and was to pass to his son. Arlington was just across the river from the capital city of the North. If he joined the South, he knew as a soldier that Arlington would be confiscated and every dollar of material wealth, the childhood home of her whom he loved more than life itself, would be sacrificed.

Yet he decided on the basis of principle, the right as he conceived it to be. He turned his back on the greatest temptation that can come to men, and pledged his all for a naked principle. I have often wondered, in the months since I stood in that room at Arlington, how many of us would have the moral courage to do a thing like that today. How easy it would have been to say: "Oh, well. . . . !"

General Grant pays a great tribute to this innate sense of fairness and sincerity of purpose in General Lee. In his *Memoirs*, he says: "We had there between the lines, sitting on horseback, a very pleasant conversation of over half an hour, in the course of which Lee said to me that the South was a big country and that we might have to march over it three or four times before the war entirely ended, but that we would now be able to do it as they could no longer resist us. He expressed it as his earnest hope, however, that we

ARLINGTON

would not be called upon to cause more loss and sacrifice of life; but he could not foretell the result. I then suggested to General Lee that there was not a man in the Confederacy whose influence with the soldiery and the whole people was as great as his, and that if he would now advise the surrender of all the armies, I had no doubt his advice would be followed with alacrity. But Lee said that he could not do that without consulting the president first. *I knew there was no use to urge him to do anything against his ideas of what was right.*"

How well Lee fought the good fight in defense of what he considered right is too well known to be here repeated. His special value as a defensive fighter was in his amazing aggressiveness, a quality in which only Stonewall Jackson equaled him. As a tactician and a strategist, he was the peer of every soldier on either side, except Grant.

His example, following the war, did much in hastening the day of good feeling and peace. He persistently refused political office in the five years intervening before his death, retiring to Washington College where he served as president. His health failed rapidly, however, and he died in 1870, at the age of sixty-three. His last words were of the war, and the dilatoriness of his subordinates, against which he constantly contended when in the field. What must his secret agony of soul have been, for with his last breath, he murmured: "Tell Hill he *must* come up!"

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

To look upon his picture following Appomattox, and one taken shortly before his death, is to realize more graphically than words can convey the great secret sorrow which must have been his.

Although all of my relatives of military age bore arms on the side of Grant and Sherman, some of them officers of the line, I find much to admire and honor in Robert E. Lee. He was a foeman worthy any adversary. I rejoice in the fact that today he is as much mine to honor as are Grant and Sherman and the others. He made an error in politics, but if our youth only approximate his adherence to principle, his kindness and humility of personal character, his integrity as a man, this nation shall, indeed, endure. As for his mistake—well, the man who really needs watching is the one who never makes a mistake!

CHAPTER XII

CARLYLE HOUSE AT ALEXANDRIA

CARLYLE HOUSE

IN ALEXANDRIA town, hidden away on North Fairfax Street, is a house which easily qualifies as being the birthplace of American freedom. It is hidden away because, unless you know about it in advance, or have a guide, you would never find it. It is entirely surrounded on four sides by business buildings; indeed, in order to reach it, you have to pass through another building and out the back door. Then you come upon it, as you see it in the picture.

In the old days when young Colonel John Carlyle first came to the wilderness town that became Alexandria, an old fort stood on the site of the present house. This fort was close to the banks of the Potomac and was for protection against the Indians. As the danger from the redskins faded away, the fort was abandoned. Colonel Carlyle, being a practical man, set his house on top of the old fort. He thereby got a solid foundation and was not put to the hard necessity of digging a cellar, the dungeons of the old fort doing very well.

Carlyle House is unique among all the houses we have discussed in this series. It is, in reality, a case where a house far overshadowed the man who lived in it. Colonel Carlyle's chief claim lies in the fact that he owned the mansion; other than that he was the warm friend of young Washington and had been a soldier in the British army, we know little of him. But his house

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

has played a tremendous part in the early history of this country. Here many events of great historical significance took place, and we can hardly afford to ignore it.

It was built in 1745, when Alexandria was still surrounded by forests, and was almost in the heart of the wilderness. It was indeed a veritable mansion for that period, built of cut stone and masonry and laid with loving care, or it could not have endured so well to this day.

Being the best and most pretentious house in town, it was only natural that it should become the center of all social and political activity, for it was an age of ostentation—an age when glittering pomp and show counted for fully as much as anything else. Men loved to dazzle, to pose, to seem to be, fully as much as they loved to really be.

Alexandria quickly became the colonial metropolis. It was the chief port of the rich and influential colony of Virginia and the headquarters of the commercial and political interests of the New World. So Colonel Carlyle selected wisely when he erected his mansion in the very center of the chief theater of action.

General Braddock, he who has come down in history as the chief numbskull among military men, gave the mansion its first bid for fame. When he came to Virginia for the purpose of leading Britain's military effort against the encroachments of the French and the Indians on the western borders, he set up his head-

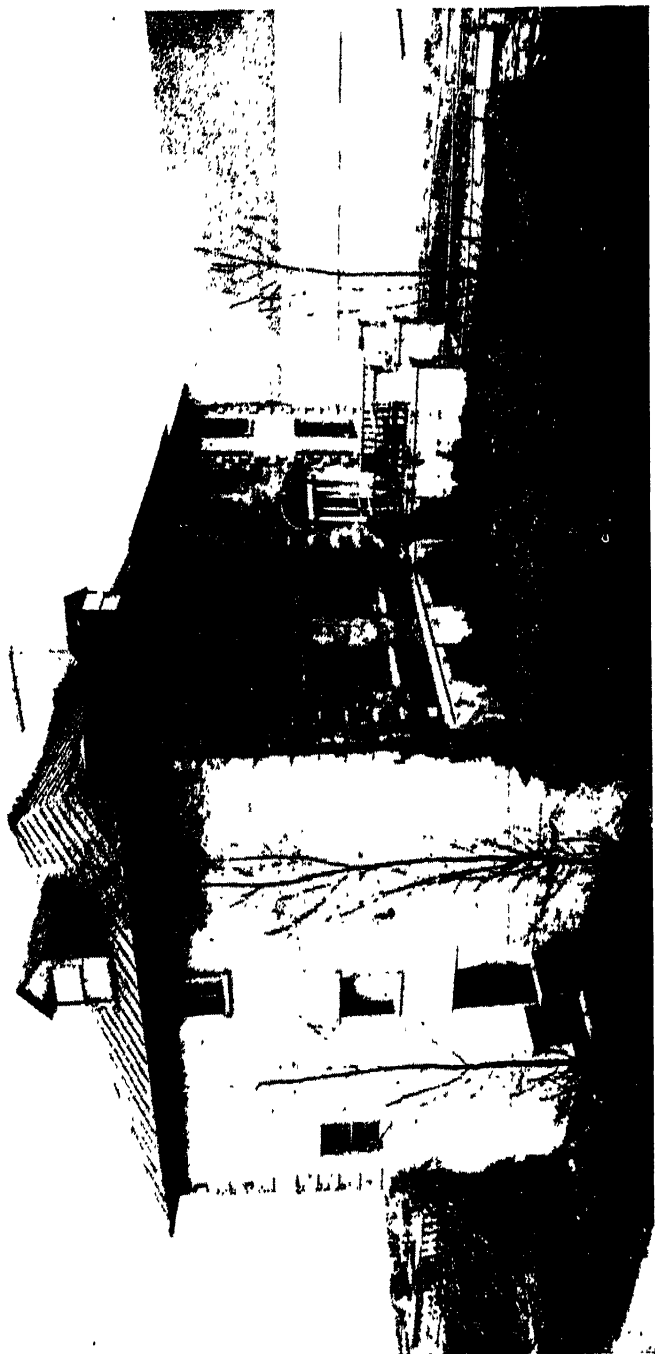


PLATE XII. Carlyle House, called the birthplace of the Constitution
and of the Declaration of Independence

CARLYLE HOUSE

quarters in Alexandria. And, through the invitation of Colonel Carlyle, he made Carlyle House his abode. For several months, during which time he was carefully preparing his illy-prepared campaign, he dwelt in the mansion and there held the conferences which carried such political dynamite for Britain's rule on this side of the water.

If we are to believe the histories which are placed in our public schools, Braddock was nothing but a blunderer who insisted on standing out in the open and presenting a living target to the savages and the French scouts. Apparently he did nothing else. But he seems to have been a typical English gentleman of the times.

A bit headstrong he was, perhaps, and somewhat tyrannical in his opinions, but merely the typical military man, for a' that. General Braddock was what might loosely be called "some pumpkins" in his profession in those days. He had won a few laurels in his thirty years' service for the Crown, in some of the hardest campaigns of history, and according to all the rules of that strange game which men play, he had a right to rely firmly on his own judgment. The fact that he admitted the allegation so strenuously is a bit amusing to us now, but it merely emphasizes the colossal stupidity of which man is capable when he begins to feel that he is infallible.

General Braddock was a brave and capable officer according to the standards of his school. He spent long, arduous months in planning his campaign, in raising

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

men and materials to insure its success. He was an organizer and a disciplinarian extraordinary, and he carefully arranged every detail, so he thought. Carlyle House was the very beehive of his activity. You can visit the room where he slept through these months and see the bed upon which he tossed during the hot nights of that memorable summer, perhaps dreaming of peaceful scenes in Old England and heartily wishing that the plagued old campaign were off his hands.

Here, in Carlyle House, General Braddock unwittingly started the Revolutionary War which was to burst out in hot flames twenty years later. It seems that the Colonies were not half so thoroughly aroused to the "danger" of the French and Indians as the politicians wanted them to be. They were not raising men and money to pursue the campaign to drive these invaders off the western frontier. General Braddock and a few of the leading gentry of the day felt that this was nothing short of treasonable, so they assembled to find ways and means to compel this support by force. This meeting, which came to be known as the Convention of Colonial Governors, met in the historic Blue Room of Carlyle House in 1755, at the call of General Braddock. It was attended by the General, by Commodore Keppel, and the following colonial governors: Shirley of Massachusetts, De Lancey of New York, Morris of Pennsylvania, Sharpe of Maryland, Dinwiddie of Virginia, Dobbs of North Carolina, and General St. Clair and Benjamin Franklin.

CARLYLE HOUSE

After the customary amount of passionate oratory and political log-rolling had taken place, the net result of the meeting was the passage of a resolution which declared it to be the sense of the representatives of the Crown assembled that the Colonies should be taxed by force to provide for the expenses of the campaign against the French and Indians, since the campaign was to be for the principal advantage of the Colonies themselves.

But our budding patriots were too jealous of their freedom in every other direction to submit to political castigation. They assembled across the street from Carlyle House, with young George Washington in the chair, and countered deftly with a resolution to the effect that "taxation and representation are in their nature inseparable." The Colonies rallied to the spirit of this mass-meeting and commenced resistance which continued until it broke out in open rebellion at Lexington and Concord twenty years later.

Braddock, hearing of the young chairman of the mass-meeting, doubtless from Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia whom Washington had served, sent for him and displayed a neat mastery of political methods by offering him a commission as major in the British army and appointment as his aide-de-camp. Washington accepted and, once again, in the Blue Room at Carlyle House, raised his voice for freedom when, in a meeting there, he protested against the plan to force the Colonies to support the military forces in crushing the enemy.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Again, in this same room, the young Major took exception to the General's judgment when he planned to march to Fort Duquesne. One can hardly blame the old General for getting testy and ignoring the advice when we recall that Washington was then twenty-three years of age and just commencing to raise a stubble on his chin. Advice may be good, whatever the source, but we don't act on advice, we act on our experience, and Braddock's experience didn't coincide with that of the almost beardless youth.

Those front steps at Carlyle House have many historic associations. From them Washington issued the first military command ever to fall from his lips, and from them he issued the last. This was in 1797, after the French war scare had blown over and he relinquished the generalship of the army. It is significant to note that in both instances he was taking the field against France.

Up these steps and into Carlyle House went some of the most influential personages of the day. As you enter, you come into a fairly good-sized hallway, with doors opening off into the principal rooms, which include two parlors, one of them on the rear and to the left, the historic Blue Room, resplendent in its rich blue hangings and wall paint; to the right are the sitting-room and the dining-room.

Many of the original furnishings are in Carlyle House today, and the rest are restorations of articles in the house when it was the center of events. It is as

CARLYLE HOUSE

correctly furnished as a house of today, and many of the little points which we consider the very necessary finishing touches of modern decorative endeavor are in evidence here, showing that we move in cycles and not necessarily in originality.

For instance, I noticed particularly that the walls were painted in Carlyle House. Of course, the colors were a bit bright to be in good taste today, but they knew something of flat wall finishes then. Mt. Vernon, representing a period of about fifty years later (when it was last redecorated), is done in wallpaper; Arlington, coming along after the dawn of the nineteenth century, is again done in paint; and The Hermitage, coming thirty years later, is again papered. So we move in cycles. First, one idea of wall decoration is uppermost, then it gives way to another. In the end, we have only the rising and falling of the tides with little new under the sun.

There is a richness and a glitter to the hangings and some of the furniture that almost amuses one. It speaks eloquently of the love for pomp and show and calls to mind the saying that some of the French aristocrats of the period, who moved in great pomp in public, lived on crusts in private. They probably had not heard of "keeping up with the Joneses," but they were doing it, nevertheless.

It is, indeed, amusing—these glittering chairs and sofas, with their stiff, straight backs (I saw but one comfortable chair in the whole house and that was in

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the Blue Room), when one looks at the floors. These rich draperies in their cloth-of-gold valances and these rich gilt chairs look decidedly humorous when one looks at the rough, crude floors with their wide and poorly finished planks. The rugs on the floors, also, are crude drawn rag rugs that spoil the whole effect of luxury which the colonial decorators were striving so hard to obtain.

There has been little improvement in draperies, in wall decoration, and in much of the furniture between those days and now, save to make them more practical and comfortable, but there has been tremendous progress in making our floors and our floor coverings harmonize with the rest of our interiors. This is the central thought striking one, the big impression we carry away.

Following the close of the Revolution, the states of Virginia and Maryland got into a boundary dispute. The governors graciously met at Carlyle House and tried manfully to agree, but, being unable to do so, called in the great Washington who settled the dispute. This little conference, which took place in the Blue Room, resulted in their determination to call another conference of the states to meet at Annapolis later in the year. At this conference, five states were represented, and it, in turn, adjourned to Philadelphia, where all thirteen of the states were represented. This Philadelphia conference formulated the Constitution of the United States.

CARLYLE HOUSE

Thus, we see that Carlyle House played a great part in the political history of our republic. It was in the historic Blue Room that the Declaration of Independence was really evolved, and, likewise, in this room the motion was started which resulted in the Constitution.

A little garden in the rear of the house, which once was on the very banks of the Potomac, is still preserved. It bears the weariness of age and the encroachments of time. In it, the General paced to and fro, worried by his problems, dreaming of loved ones in Old England. In it, Washington, too, made light with the Carlyle maiden whom gossip long associated with his name, and who is said to be responsible for the frequent entry in his diary: "Lodged at Col. Carlyle's house. . . ."

But time brings us out at strange ends. The old house is now alone with its memories, proud memories of an almost forgotten day when great men and women thronged its halls and weighed momentous decisions and made gay times in their lighter hours. It is well that it should be so. It has earned its peace and its right to be alone with its dead. It no longer has the honor of being a home, for no human being disturbs its slumbers and its reveries, save those of us who wander silently through it, paying tribute to it as a great shrine.

And it is a great shrine, one that should be better known to our people, for it links us more intimately to

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the whole period of our history than almost any other house in this country. Built as it is on the foundations of an old Indian fortress, utilizing today, in the cellars, the dungeons where many noble warriors of the Virginia forests languished, intimately connected with the great moving drama of the French and Indian War, the Revolution, and even of the Civil War, it is, indeed, a strong link to the past.

CHAPTER XIII

**CRAIGIE HOUSE, THE HOME OF
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW**

CRAIGIE HOUSE

POETS are, and commonly have been, alone and apart from the rest of mankind. The world has had little time for their flights of fancy, or even for their nuggets of philosophy, until it is too late. It is a material world, a world which believes or values little that it cannot see or feel or touch. Being a material world, it cannot get over the idea that men who do not work with their hands do not work at all, and so it ignores or persecutes its greatest geniuses. It is a strange paradox that the surest way to win the approbation of the world is to practice the most monumental selfishness; seek to serve the race or put a song in their hearts or lighten their burdens, and you are passed up, given the laugh.

Longfellow was a striking exception to this somewhat general rule. He did not starve in a garret or come into his greatest popularity long years after his death. He was not a recluse, shunning the world in instinctive distrust; nor was he a weaver of impossible tales or a chanter of an austere Muse. He was a man of the world; a man who wrote in his diary, during his most productive years, that "fully half my evenings are spent in social life in Boston;" a man who dined out almost every evening, whose callers ran to twenty or more a day; a man who traveled much in Europe; who once wrote, "I am almost killed with the kindnesses shown

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

me, and I have met everyone here that I would most care to meet." He was on intimate terms with all the literary masters of all time. He spoke and wrote some ten or twelve languages as fluently as English, and his translations from other languages are said to be unexcelled for literary excellence, especially metrical translations.

Material want was practically unknown by him in all his long life. From his mother he inherited his love for poetry, music, and Nature, and from his father, an attorney, a strain of Yankee shrewdness which did not countenance the letting go of one thing until the footing on the other hand was assured. Immediately upon his graduation from college he was appointed a professor of modern languages by his alma mater and given more than a year abroad to fit himself for the post. From that time until after his literary earnings made him a wealthy man, he continued to lecture on modern languages. It is true that he complains in his diary almost constantly of the work and apparently was irked by it almost to desperation, but small boys having a taste for cake are impatient when they must eat other and more substantial fare. Even great artists sometimes imagine that they could live and thrive entirely in the higher and more ethereal realms, but the very discipline of humdrum affairs only serves to whet the appetite and sharpen the perception for the particular mental hobby given each of us. It follows as night the day that to have life ideal and just as we would like

CRAIGIE HOUSE

it to be would soon lay the race down in the dust of impotency.

Down on Brattle Street, in Cambridge, is the famous old Craigie House, for many years the home of Longfellow and now presided over by his granddaughter. Before Longfellow acquired it, it was owned by a number of persons, among them the eccentric Widow Craigie, whose husband had been commissary general in Washington's army. General Craigie doubtless was a good provider for Washington's men, for he held his rank throughout the war, but, like many good men who can serve others efficiently and with foresight, he had no genius when it came to his own affairs. Following the war, in the mad rush to "put up a front" and impress the neighbors with his station in life, the good General wasted his substance in right riotous living. When the will was duly read and probated, it was found that his proud widow had not a sou with which to keep up the pace he had set; nay, all she had was the roof over her head, and right thankful she doubtless was that General Craigie had been taken to his rest before it, too, was gone.

The Widow Craigie was reduced from her proud state to taking in boarders, and her sensitiveness about it made her seem very "eccentric" to those around her. Students were not admitted, only unmarried professors and young gentlemen of business. It was strictly a stag affair, and the good widow presided over the house in feudal style. When one is rich or has caste

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

or ancestors, one may be "eccentric" without being ludicrous, but to be poor and somewhat contrary to custom is to be just a plain fool.

When the young professor of modern languages came to the Widow Craigie looking for lodging, the good dame turned him down flat. In the first place, she thought he was a student, and in the second, he hadn't been properly introduced. The future master of the house turned away in disappointment, for the lofty majesty of the place had already gathered him in, just as it does everyone who first sees it. It chanced, just as Longfellow was leaving, to come out that he was the author of "Outre Mer." The widow grasped his coat-tails quickly and drew him in, and saved her name for posterity! For she had taken a great liking to that book.

Some years before, when Boston town was in the midst of great events, Craigie House had been the headquarters of General Washington through one whole winter. Indeed, he and Mistress Martha dwelt there in real style during the winter of 1775. Just down the street a few blocks is the site of Washington Elm, where the young Virginian assumed command, and diagonally across Harvard Common is the spot where the rebels assembled the night before Bunker Hill.

The Widow Craigie, hastening to hold the young genius in her house, almost as a last straw to revive lost prestige socially, accorded him the suite General Washington had occupied. Here, in two great rooms

CRAIGIE HOUSE

which open into each other, the young poet dwelled for many years, and here most of his famous poems were written. So much for history. Craigie House, as it is today, is much the great mansion house which Longfellow himself described as being like "an Italian villa." Only one other place in all America exceeds it in exterior impressiveness, and that is Mt. Vernon. But Mt. Vernon has more to set it off than Craigie House has, a more magnificent setting and a gigantic plan behind it. Craigie House, however, stands alone amid only a setting of trees and shrubbery and lawns.

X I think it was when I had penetrated the side lawns, the flower-garden, and the generous walks, far to the rear of the lot, where even a vegetable-garden is concealed, that I began to realize the great beauty and lofty grandeur of the place. Here one finds the seat where Longfellow wrote his only love poem, first called "Hesperus" and later changed to "The Evening Star." It is said that it was written a short time after his second marriage and was inspired by his seeing his bride, from his bench, as she appeared at her window.

I would estimate the size of the lot to be something like two hundred feet wide by about one thousand to twelve hundred feet deep. The place is really divided into a series of lawns, including the flower-garden, there being four or five of them from front to back. The side lawns especially are extremely attractive from every point of view. In the flower-garden, one can find a situation to suit almost every mood, the summer-

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

house flanking it being a wonderful retreat for one of contemplative turn of mind. Here, at least thirty or forty persons could be comfortably seated to enjoy the view over the perennial garden in the foreground.

A path leading along the boundary fence toward the rear of the lot intrigued me greatly. At last I followed it and found that it led to a clump of trees and shrubbery massed along the rear lot line, into which branched other smaller paths. Upon following them, I found that each led to a small bench or seat and some were protected by trellises covered with vines. Here the poet doubtless found complete retreat from all annoyance or thought of the busy world of curiosity seekers, as he thought out his great poems and ballads. The setting is wonderful. Everywhere there is a majestic breadth of exquisite vision, a hint of broad and lordly expanse, just the sure touches to give wings to fluttering thought and utterance to the imagination. Here one would say that a great poet dwelt, whether one knew for sure before coming. Never have I felt so keenly such a tremendous atmosphere in exact keeping with the work of the man it so accurately reflected. It is not a cheap, sentimental atmosphere. No mere rhymers of words, no common composer of thin ditties could measure up to it; it is not the setting of the amateurish love lyrist, but the background of a maker of epics, a craftsman whose strokes on the canvas of literature took in the compass of whole movements and races and times.

I am sure that I could linger in these quiet walks

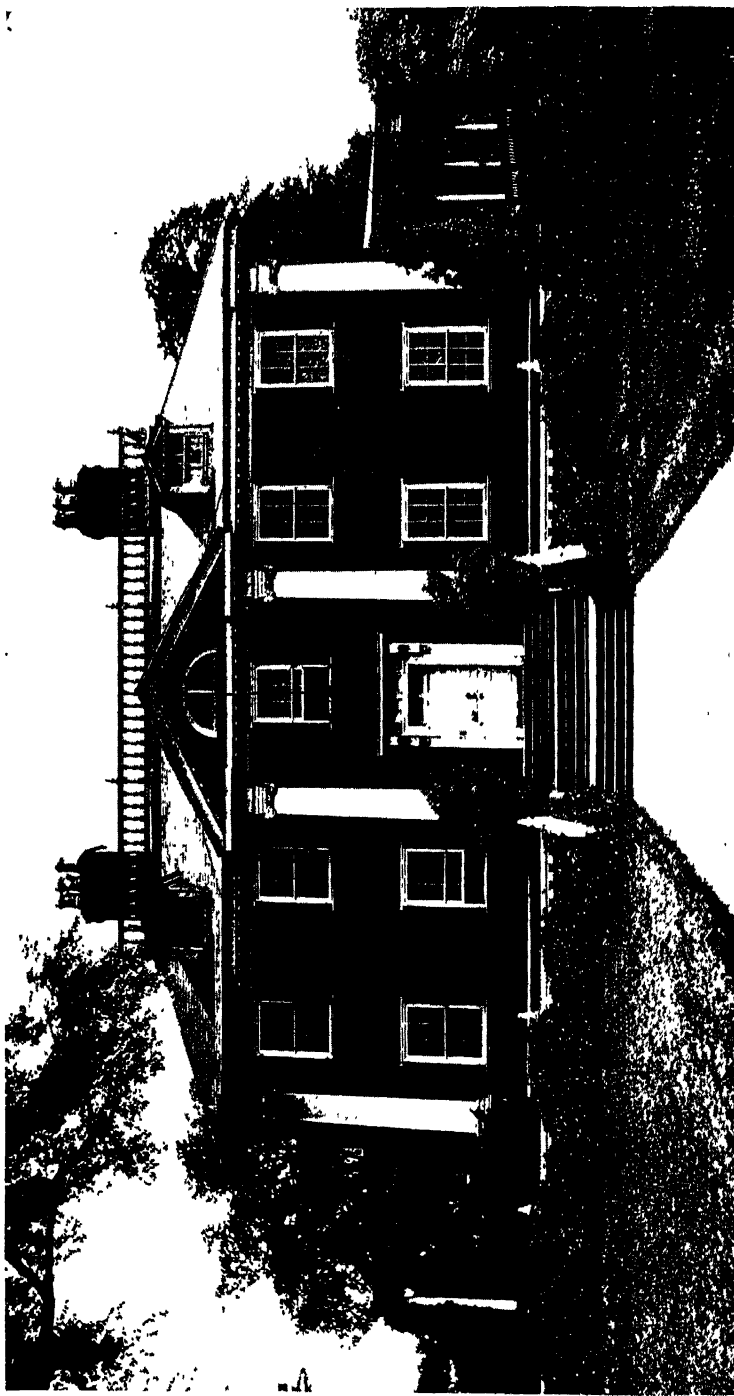


PLATE XIII. Craigie House, the home of Henry W. Longfellow, at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

CRAIGIE HOUSE

and dream on these benches for ages, and whether I be merchant, or money-changer, or a dabbler in words, I could not help but be the more refined and purified for the hours thus laid on the altar of eternity. It is not an atmosphere of repose nor a lure to physical dreaming. It isn't a suggestion of drowsiness that comes to one; I speak in what might be termed a spiritual sense, for lack of better words. Within one surges a mighty current of torment, something of that divine discontent of which Emerson speaks. There is a will to be doing something, to seize on the skirts of eternity as it flits by, and make some vital and lasting contribution to the Presence who has inspired this invisible choir which one can feel and sense and hear, but not see.

I wish that those who know Longfellow merely as a name in literature, merely as the author of "Hiawatha," or "Myles Standish," or "Evangeline," who have classified him merely as a leisurely and unhurried poet, might really come to know the man as he was. We have made him something of a patriarch, something almost inhuman, just as we have made Washington and Lincoln. But he was very, very human, very, very busy, and hurried and restless. He had, more than I have been able to discover in any other writer of his times, save Hawthorne, that "divine discontent," that eternal restlessness which every true artist has. He complains frequently of his discontent in his diary. In October, 1846, he made this entry: "I am in despair at the swift flight of time and the utter impossibility

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

I feel to lay hold upon anything permanent. All my hours and days go to perishable things. . . . I have hardly a moment to think of my own writings and am cheated of some of the fairest hours. This is the extreme of folly; and if I knew a man far off in some foreign land, doing as I do here, I should say he was mad."

He was extremely active and craved outside contact, rather than being of sedentary inclinations. A man of action, fond of boxing and dancing, shortly after he wrote his "Psalm of Life" he made this entry in his journal: "I live in a great house which looks like an Italian villa; have two large rooms opening into each other. They were once General Washington's chamber. I breakfast at seven on tea and toast, and dine at five or six, generally in Boston. In the evening I walk on the Common with Hillard or alone, then go back to Cambridge on foot. If not very late, I sit an hour with Felton or Sparke. For nearly two years I have not studied at night save now and then. Most of the time am alone; smoke a great deal; wear a broad-rimmed black hat, black frock coat, a black cane. Molest no one. Dine out frequently. In winter go much into Boston society. The last year have written a great deal, enough to make volumes. Have not read much. Have a number of literary plans and projects. . . . I do not like this sedentary life. I want action. I want to travel. Am too excited, too tumultuous inwardly."

In 1850, he mentions frequently his weariness of the

CRAIGIE HOUSE

routine of his professorship, saying he was "pawing to get free his hinder parts." And again: "If I wish to do anything in literature it must be done now. Few men have written good poetry after fifty." It was four years, however, before he finally gave up his professorship, being succeeded by Lowell, and at this time he plunged into the writing of "Hiawatha," which brought all kinds of charges down upon his head, ranging from plagiarism downward.

Longfellow's greatest weakness as a literary craftsman was his cosmopolitan viewpoint in literature. For many years he lacked originality and all through his early years he was profoundly influenced by the work of his contemporaries. Thus, his early poems show the influence of Bryant in theme, and his prose writings the influence of Washington Irving, whom he enthusiastically praises in his journal. It is not generally known, but Longfellow was a prolific writer of prose in his earlier years and even attempted the role of novelist, having produced three or four volumes.

His wide knowledge of literature of almost every country, his constant translation of the works of others, and his familiarity with the folk songs and legends of all races made the charge of plagiarism extremely difficult to refute in many minds. He borrowed constantly and frankly; perhaps it is better to say that he took old tales and transposed them into more popular form and made them the better for his art. But the fact that he borrowed the idea confused many minds unable

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

to see that the same story had been told in a new way. "Hiawatha" he borrowed from many incidents in the "Kalevala," and his "Evangeline" he borrowed bodily from Hawthorne, who had tried to novelize it and failed. "Myles Standish" was more his own, but based upon tradition and history.

Longfellow was primarily a technician; he was not a great craftsman in plot or story. He might be called an interpreter, one who took odd tales and translated them into current language. He was primarily the poet of childhood, because he spun his stories, his ballads, in simple language of quiet measure which appealed, and continues to appeal, to the child in the schoolroom. His great audience continues to be the children of America, and in this his hold upon posterity is secure.

Across the street from Craigie House there is a little parkway leading down to the banks of the Charles River. This parkway was purchased by the school children of Cambridge and Boston, the houses torn down, and the grounds laid out in a memorial park, so that the Charles River might be seen from the window of Longfellow's study, as it was in his day. There, in the center of the park, you find an excellent bust of the poet, with a marble background on which are silhouetted the principal figures of his great ballads. It is Childhood's tribute to Childhood's patron saint.

When you go to Cambridge to visit Craigie House, plan to go on Saturday afternoon, for then you will be

CRAIGIE HOUSE

permitted to visit the interior of the old mansion. I waited two days and felt well repaid, but the real atmosphere to me was found on the outside. The elegance of the old mansion, the rich curtains and hangings in the poet's study, however, reflect the glory of another individuality. I saw and heard and felt more in the garden and the quiet retreats in the rear of the garden.

But we know that here dwelt a man who in personal life was one of the great, strong souls of all time. His nature was wonderfully sweet and pure. His character was much like that of General Lee—tender, sweet, pure, refined, and, like Lee, he got most of it from his invalid mother, who passionately loved music, poetry, and Nature. From his father he had the benefit of wise counsel, a good education, and sympathetic interest so long as he lived. The letters between Longfellow and his father, especially during that period when he was casting about for a career, form a powerful chapter in the story of his life.

His private life was one of severe tragedy. His first wife died in Europe, while they were traveling abroad; his second wife died suddenly at Craigie House in 1861. She had been sealing up the curls of her two daughters when a lighted match fell on the floor and set fire to her dress. She died the next day from her burns and shock. Longfellow was so badly burned trying to save her that he could not even attend the funeral. His suffering and his tragic loss were almost

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

unbearable, especially when the funeral came on the anniversary of his wedding day.

Months later, a friend expressed the hope that he might be able to "bear his cross." Patiently he exclaimed, "Bear the cross, yes; but what if one is stretched upon it!"

He found strength to carry on only in the difficult work of translating Dante, which he completed in whole cantos a day. It is a strange anomaly that whom Fate loves she wears down, and only the weaklings are crushed under her burdens. The strong struggle on and carry their mite to the coffers of the race.

CHAPTER XIV

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

DOUBTLESS we all have our own individual ideas of genius. To some one type of work we bow, because to us it symbolizes the highest kind of endeavor. It may be to something we cannot do ourselves that we award our homage—the weak admire the strong; the unlettered, the cultured; the underling, the man of power; the laborer, the industrial captain; the followers, the leaders.

I think we all sense instinctively the genius of the song-writer. While history has paid its homage to those who have taken their walled cities, or brought only misery to their fellows in their ruthless search for vainglorious power; while our literature, even, has been a literature of lust and warfare; while even art has suffered under that false taint, now and then, out of the void around us, there wells up within us the soul-thought of some simple, perhaps obscure song-writer, which clutches our hearts in tremendous embrace and awes us into silence with its strange familiarity.

We recognize it as our own, as the secret longing or thought or cherished sentiment with which we have lived our days, but could not express ourselves. He is truly great who can, or who has, immortalized a bit of human sentiment, who has plumbed the depths of the human heart and given form, expression and harmony to its innermost longings. He, like the harp, is but an

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

instrument keenly attuned to his times, through which and upon which the spirit of humanity—in its longings, its aspirations, its struggles—leaps into being. He is truly the servant of all and the work he has done continues to charm, soothe, and benefit millions of his fellows long after he is gone and forgotten. His hold upon humanity is as eternal as the stars, for he put a song in humanity's heart. He sought to strip it of nothing for himself!

A little while ago, down in Old Kentucky, I visited, near Bardstown, the mansion where "My Old Kentucky Home" was written in 1852 by Stephen C. Foster, the greatest American folk-song writer. Here, also, at about the same time, Foster wrote "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground," which was his tribute to old Judge Rowan, the "Massa" of Federal Hill, now called "My Old Kentucky Home." The "Massa" epitomizes in a few refrains the whole length and depth of human grief. In a few brief, bold strokes Foster laid bare the human heart in its sadness and charted its whole course. I thought, as I stood at the grave of Judge Rowan, at the very spot where Foster wrote the lyric for that song, that it was likewise a great love song. The tenderest of the Greek love songs ended with a sob; the "Massa" song was the catch in the breath, the sob, of Foster for his kinsman and idol, Judge Rowan. Aye, this is a spot to stir the heart to undreamed depths and still the hand! At Federal Hill one walks on holy ground and lingers amid scenes which have

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

produced more far-reaching contributions than they who thoughtlessly peer within its walls imagine. Bardstown, across the valley on the other hill, was settled in the momentous year 1775 by emigrants from Virginia and Pennsylvania. Kentucky was then, and for long years afterward, the “dark and bloody ground.” The savages were a constant menace, and seven years later they massacred all the settlers at Polk’s Station, the second fort established in the county, which was just eight miles east of Bardstown.

Judge John Rowan, the founder of Federal Hill, came to Kentucky as a child and grew up in the wilderness, a man of tremendous strength of will and courage, a vital power in the building of the young commonwealth. He built the first portion of Federal Hill in 1795, a long, one-story brick structure, in one end of which he opened the first law office in the state. For sixty-five years Federal Hill continued to be the very center of the leadership of Kentucky. Scores of the best minds of the commonwealth were trained by the old judge. It is said that even Henry Clay sat at his feet and was a frequent visitor at Federal Hill. Clay succeeded Judge Rowan as United States Senator from Kentucky. When Rowan died in 1843, he was succeeded by his son, “Young John” Rowan, trained by his father for the legal profession, a sharp and ready debater, a man of very great culture and personal attractiveness. Young John had no love for politics or personal attachment for the law, but his brilliancy as a debater and platform

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

orator caused him to be drafted for public service again and again by his admiring constituency. President Polk appointed him minister to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1848. He spent two happy years in the artistic society of southern Europe and two more in travel in the principal centers of culture before returning to Federal Hill.

He had just reopened Federal Hill when a house-party was staged to which his cousin, Stephen C. Foster, came. Foster was then twenty-six years of age and already famous as a composer. Rowan had heard his songs sung in England, and he greatly appreciated the genius of his kinsman, because he had a good voice himself and a very great love for music. Although he was twenty years older than Foster, they were common pals on a common footing.

There were two others who came to Federal Hill who were to contribute much to our literature. Theodore O'Hara, who wrote "The Bivouac of the Dead" and "A Dirge for the Brave Old Pioneer," was there, and William Haines Lytle, whose ode of Mark Antony, "I am Dying, Egypt, Dying," is known to all who love the classics of literature. Foster was shy, diffident. Being of the keen sensitiveness of the born artist, he was the victim of melancholy and of his emotions. So it is with every great artist. If he be the master of his emotions, then his feeling is stifled, cut off; he who has no feeling cannot reflect accurately human emotion. Great writers always are great because they have first felt

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

deeply and been profoundly moved by human suffering or aspiration. And they are great in proportion as they reflect the suffering and aspirations of the many.

On his way to Bardstown, Foster had seen slaves sold out of Kentucky for the Louisiana cotton-fields at the great Cincinnati slave market. He had been profoundly moved by this tragedy in the lives of the slaves, when “hard times” forced masters to sell their slaves and break up families. Foster instinctively knew the hearts of the slaves; for years he had been writing plantation songs featuring the negro.

At Federal Hill, during the progress of the house party mentioned, his sentiment leaped into being. Naturally, it sought expression in the way he had trained himself, through the lyrics and melody of song. Lingered on the lawn at Federal Hill, wandering through the fields and the woods, watching the pickaninnies playing in the cabins, feeling the warmth of gladness and prosperity on every hand, he naturally used it as the contrasting background upon which to paint the great tragedy he saw back of it all.

And so the lyric came: “The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home; ’tis summer, the darkies are gay; the corn top’s ripe and the meadow’s in the bloom, and the birds make music all the day. The young folks roll on the little cabin floor, all merry, all happy and bright.”

Thus the happy background against which he now sketches in the real tragedy his heart sensed: “By and

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

by hard times comes aknocking at the door—then my old Kentucky home, good night! . . . They hunt no more for the 'possum and the 'coon on the meadow, the hill and the shore; they sing no more by the glimmer of the moon on the bench by the old cabin door. The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart, with sorrow where all was delight; the time has come when the darkies have to part—then my old Kentucky home, good night!"

The very depths of the tragedy he sensed stabs one to the quick when it leaps bodily out of the sad refrain: "Weep no more, my lady, weep no more today, we will sing one song for the old Kentucky home—for the old Kentucky home, far away!"

While the frame upon which it was hung was the tragedy of the expatriated slave, the song has endured because it is the song of the expatriated man or woman everywhere. It was first sung at Federal Hill one evening, a few days after it was written, by a sweet-voiced young lady from Baltimore, Foster himself playing the accompaniment. It owed its instant popularity in both North and South to a peculiar double-edged appeal which it carried to the times. To the North, the third stanza not used any more) fed the hatred of slavery, and to the South the whole song was essentially a sweet bit of plantation sentiment, but it has come adown the years to us because it tugs the mystic chords of sentiment and gives expression to the longing of the expatriate for old, familiar scenes.

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

The other song associated with Federal Hill, which came from Foster's heart, has already been mentioned. It is said that Foster sat one day for a long time at the grave of old Judge Rowan, at one corner of the lawn. To the rear of the lawn was the cornfield and down over the hill the slave cabins. In front of him was the willow tree in which a mocking-bird was singing, and over the grave the ivy was creeping as it does today, more than seventy years later.

His sensitive nature caught the melancholy side of death, and with unerring touch his artistry seized upon the grief of the slaves for “Massa” with most powerful effect. An account of his own sadness or grief would not have created the impression sought, for it was natural, commonplace.

Foster wrote the lyric, then took the flute which he always carried in his pocket when walking in the fields or woods, and trailed the mocking-bird, which was singing the thrush's melancholy refrain. He carefully picked out on the flute the notes of this refrain, until he had identified them. Then he went back to the house, where his young wife was sewing, and persuaded her to go to the harpsichord and pick out the notes as he played them from the flute. In this way he got the air for the song.

Federal Hill is rich in other memories. For nearly one hundred thirty years it has stood on the bluff outside Bardstown, among the trees, rearing a proud head above the countryside. I wish that every reader might visit

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

it and see with his own eyes the treasures it holds, and sense something of the atmosphere of the place. I do not wonder, now that I have seen it, that it exerted such an influence over Foster, just a visitor within its walls.

The house was built of brick and has been cemented or stuccoed on the outside. The newer portion, that to the front, originally comprised three stories, but some years ago the upper story was destroyed by fire.

One enters a typical wide old colonial hallway running through the house to the rear. Federal Hill is much more "colonial" inside than it is on the outside. The wide, generous colonial stairway to the rear, with its mahogany rail, the ancient back door with its ponderous latch—all betoken the greatness and security of a departed day.

Colonel Ben La Pree, the curator, gave me an interesting sidelight on the subject of locks as we discussed this quaint old back door.

"In the old days," he said, "none of the houses were equipped with locks on the doors. Do you know why?"

Visions of the old bars and latchstrings flashed into my mind, and right with it the thought that perhaps locks were not used by the good pioneers because they were too expensive. However, I wisely kept my opinion to myself and waited for the mystery to be explained.

The Colonel smiled. "So long as the men did their drinking at home," he added, "there were no locks on



PLATE XIV. "My Old Kentucky Home," near Bardstown, Kentucky,
where Foster wrote his masterpiece.

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

the doors. When they commenced to go away from home to meet at the inns and taverns in town to drink, then locks were necessary and were introduced in the old mansions!”

Then I examined the stairway, which reminded me a great deal of the one at The Hermitage, the home of Jackson, and the Colonel gently explained that the upper rooms were not open to the public! Ah, the disappointment which those words carry, and how often have I heard them uttered in our great shrines!

We went into the guest chamber, which is off the left rear end of the hall. To the right, as you enter the large, cheery room, is a great mahogany four-poster bed. The bed-posts are very severe and tall and are without the usual canopy or covering. The bed seems to have been hand-made, perhaps by slave labor, because one can see the marks of the drawing-knife on it. The slight effort at ornamentation also tends to confirm the suspicion that it was made by hand.

On this bed slept Foster and his young bride, when on their honeymoon. In this room they stayed during their visit in that memorable summer of 1852 when Foster wrote “My Old Kentucky Home” and “Massa’s in the Cold, Cold Ground.” Here, also, have slept five Presidents of the United States, Lafayette, Henry Clay, a royal prince of France, and many other distinguished guests.

Opposite the bed, and against the wall to the left, is an ancient clothes-closet of mahogany, the inside of

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

which is lined with curious wooden pegs on which have hung the clothes of the guests. It is an interesting speculation to visualize just *what* has hung there. The clothes of the bride, the ponderous and highly embellished waistcoats of the men, the capes and shawls—the thick and quaint umbrellas!

To the right, two windows overlook the famous cornfield to the rear of the mansion which inspired “the corn top’s ripe,” and the other two windows overlook the lawn, in the far corner of which is the family burial-ground where old “Massa” and young “Massa” sleep.

Adjoining this guest-room, and the first on the left as we enter the hallway at the front door, is the old parlor where occurred many brilliant gatherings in the old days. Here was first sung “My Old Kentucky Home” at that gay party mentioned elsewhere.

Directly across the hall from it is the dining-room, furnished with furniture presented by Louis Philippe, who spent two years in Bardstown while an exiled prince. He occupied his time teaching dancing and French, and when he ascended the throne of France, he sent this furniture to Judge Rowan in appreciation for the kindness shown him during those troublesome times. In addition, the dining-room table and chairs were the gift of Lafayette and were presented to Judge Rowan in appreciation for Rowan’s services in looking after his wild land grants in Kentucky. Thus, everywhere you turn are intimate contacts with the great and the élite of a departed day in our history. In fact, in

“MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME”

this house one finds more original furniture and furnishings than in any of the other homes visited, with only one or two exceptions. The mansion was owned continuously by a Rowan until 1923, when it became the property of the State of Kentucky and was dedicated as a state park.

In the parlor previously mentioned, a painting of Foster hangs over the fireplace, while on the wall to one side are two oil paintings of the daughters of the younger Rowan—beautiful, attractive, quaintly dressed “belles” of the old, old days. Their pleasant faces touch one with some of the melancholy which Foster caught. We can almost see them bursting with eagerness to blurt out some joke to the artist who has just cautioned them to “please sit quietly and hold the pose,” as we see their dancing eyes and the hint of repressed smile in the corner of their lips.

What life, what youth, what gaiety, what treasure is this which once thronged these rooms, romped these halls, and now is gone forever! Their lips are stilled—only Foster can speak to us today!

Foster lived a life of very deep personal melancholy. I have already accredited it to his deep emotionalism, the great attunement of the true artist, where all the criss-cross currents of sensation play at will upon the nature. Little do we dream of the misery of those who give us our songs, our pictures, our dramas. They are damned by their own gift—of the world but not a part of it.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Some call it weakness because Foster went to a drunkard's grave at thirty-eight. Perhaps it was, but let us be sure that we appreciate first the battleground a true artist's nature is before we hasten to condemn. For him I have only sympathy and pity; he probably could help his destiny no more than the sheep going to slaughter. That he struggled against it is proved by the more than one hundred sixty songs he gave us, plumbing every angle of human emotion.

He started out a writer of minstrel ditties—jazz, we might call them loosely today—but he constantly rose to greater heights as his artistry developed. Frankly, a nonsense writer at the first, he became more and more serious-minded in his purpose, and his association with the negro as a subject emerged in that great portrait of the Job-like slave character, "Old Black Joe," in 1860.

It is an education in the development of Foster, the artist, to run over his list of songs, to play them or have them played again.

As his nature, his very body, was ground down under the burden of the deepening melancholy of his soul, his artistry soared higher and higher. It can be said of Stephen C. Foster with greater truth than of any artist in history that he sacrificed his all, even his personal happiness, to his art. And while his habits are questionable, out of all the artists I know, he alone never gave expression to a single bit of the sordid side of the life he lived. His songs are sweet and pure, and "by their works ye shall know them."

▪

CHAPTER XV

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

▪

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

ALITTLE while ago I rode with Paul Revere on that memorable night of April 18, 1775, when he roused the Minute Men to arms, and set the match that started the fire that gave birth to our country. It was a pilgrimage in patriotism, a rededication to the ideals which have made this nation great, and which we must cling to if we are to continue on the journey toward our high destiny.

I went to the Old South Meeting House in Boston where the first warning from the patriots was flung upon tyrant ears by the eloquent and fearless Warren, later to fall at Bunker Hill. I visited the spot across the street where the Sons of Liberty, which Paul Revere was instrumental in organizing, were accustomed to meet during the long and anxious months when they were engaged in watching every move of the soldiery.

Then I went up to 19 North Square, in the old part of Boston Town, to the house where the brave and determined Revere lived and toiled for thirty years. Then to the Old North where the lanterns were hung, and I was ready for the famous "ride" to Lexington and Concord. It should be so with everyone who makes this journey; indeed, if you would get the most out of it, if you would rededicate yourself again to the principles which moved these men to hazard their all,

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

you should go thoroughly grounded in the historical associations of the times in which they lived.

At the Revere House, I was privileged to obtain a copy of the statement which Paul Revere made before a notary public a few days after the ride, which was prepared in the thought that it might be used as evidence to submit to the British government to support the claims of the colonists that war was being made upon them.

I quote part of this deposition, written in Paul Revere's own language: "I was sent for by Docr. Joseph Warren, of said Boston, on the evening of the 18th of April, about 10 o'clock; When he desired me 'to go to Lexington, and inform Mr. Samuel Adams, and the Honl. John Hancock, Esqr., that there was a number of soldiers, composed of Light troops, & Grenadiers, marching to the bottom of the Common, where was a number of Boats to receive them; it was supposed that they were going to Lexington, by way of Cambridge River, to take *them*, or go to Concord, to destroy the Colony Stores'.

"I proceeded immeaditly, and was put across Charles River and landed near Charlestown Battery; went in town, and there got a Horse. While in Charles town, I was informed by Richd. Devens, Esqr., that he mett that evening, after Sun sett, Nine Officers of the Ministerial Army, mounted on Good Horses, & Armed, going toward Concord.

"I sett off, it was then about 11 o'clock, the Moon

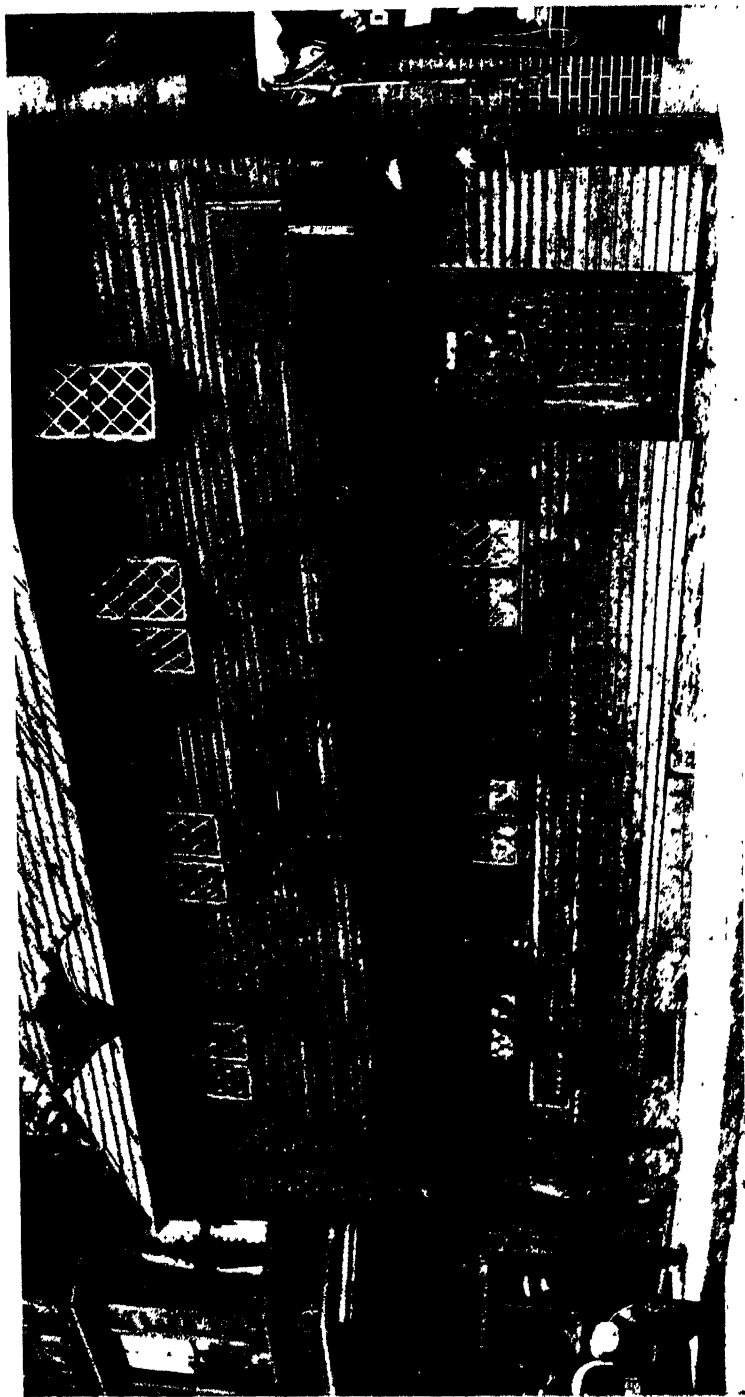


PLATE XV. Paul Revere's Home, Boston.

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

shone bright. I had got almost over Charlestown Common, towards Cambridge, when I saw two officers on Horse-back, standing under the shade of a Tree, in a narrow part of the road. I was near enough to see their Holsters, & Cockades. One of them Started his horse towards me, the other up the road, as I supposed to head me, should I escape the first. I turned my horse short about, and rid upon a full Gallop for Mistick Road, he followed me about 300 Yards, and finding he could not catch me, returned. I proceeded to Lexington, thro Mistick (now Medford), and alarmed Mr. Adams & Col. Hancock.

"After I had been there about half an hour Mr. Dawes arrived, who came from Boston, over the neck.

"We set off for Concord, & were overtaken by a young Gentm. named Prescott (Dr. Samuel Prescott, who had been making a late call on a Lexington girl whom he was courting), who belonged to Concord & was going home. When we had got about half-way from Lexington to Concord, the other two stopped at a House to awake the man. I kept along. When I had got about 200 Yards ahead of them, I saw two officers as before. I called to my company to come up, saying there was two of them, (for I had told them what Mr. Devens had told me, and of my being stopped). In an instant I saw four of them, who rode up to me with their pistols in their hands, said 'G—d d——n you, stop. If you go an Inch further, you are a dead Man.' Immediately Mr. Prescott came up. We attempted to

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

git thro them, but they kept before us, and swore that if we did not turn into that pasture they would blow our brains out, (they had placed themselves opposite to a pair of Barrs, and had taken the Barrs down). They forced us in. When we had got in, Mr. Prescott said 'Put On!' He took to the left, I to the right towards a wood at the bottom of the Pasture, intending, when I gained that, to jump my Horse & run afoot. Just as I reached it, out started six officers, seized my bridle, put their pistols to my Breast, ordered me to dismount, which I did. One of them, who appeared to have the command there, and much of a Gentleman, Asked me where I came from; I told him. He asked what time I left. I told him; he seemed surprised, said, 'Sir, may I crave your name?' I answered 'My name is Revere.' 'What,' said he, 'Paul Revere?' I answered 'Yes.' The Others abused much; but he told me not to be afraid, no one should hurt me. . . ."

Thus, Paul Revere was captured and never reached Concord, although Dr. Prescott did and aroused the Minute Men in surrounding towns so rapidly that enough were able to gather at Concord North Bridge to drive back the redcoats later in the day. Revere was taken back toward Lexington by his captors, but succeeded in escaping and reaching the Tavern House in time to rescue John Hancock's trunk before the British arrived. He made off through the lines of the Minute Men drawn up on Lexington Common just as the British came in sight, a block away, from around the

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

meeting-house. As he disappeared to safety behind the Jonathan Harrington house, he saw the first shots fired, after hearing Captain John Parker's famous order: "Stand your ground! Do not fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have war, let it begin here!"

Few of us know the real Paul Revere. Many of us even doubt that he ever lived; indeed, one correspondent has written me expressing the hope that I will not "fall" for the biggest hoax in history and award the dashing horseman a place in this series. But my correspondent is wrong, dead wrong. Paul Revere not only rode that night of April 18, 1775, to Lexington and beyond, but he was very much a real Yankee man and lived to a good old age, dying at his home in Boston on May 10, 1818, aged eighty-three.

So far as his famous ride is concerned, it is the least of the patriotic services which he rendered our country. It is due to the whims of Fate that it should be singled out and given the prominence it has, but that is due to our love for the romantic and the spectacular. There is a strong tendency in retelling his story to swing into the well-known lines which the poet has used—lines perhaps better known to the average reader than the details of the man's life. We look askance at poets as historians, because of their resort to the doubtful authority of "poetic license," and as we come to doubt their phrases, we often achieve the result of doubting even the authenticity of the whole subject matter about which they have written.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

But we cannot down the written word, if it carries an appeal to the heart or to the imagination. It is the most imperishable thing we have, even more durable than the rocks and crags. The historical event itself, paradox though it may be, lingers in our hearts and minds only in proportion to the life given it by the pen.

It isn't what great deed was done that counts, but what great word was written about it that makes it endure. Paul Revere's ride is known to all of us because the poet has made it immortal. As proof of the first assertion, I cite the ride of Mr. Dawes, or of Dr. Prescott—think of the romance suggested in his call to destiny that night as he returned from his lovemaking!—or of Caesar Rodney of Delaware, whose ride and vote absolutely saved our country. The event minus the inspired pen does not count. Neither Rodney nor Dawes nor Prescott had a poet to touch the magic wand to their deed, and so most of us do not know that they ever lived.

Of the four, Paul Revere was entitled to imperishable fame. If you dig deep into the history of that momentous period, you will find him at the bottom of almost every deed that formulated public opinion and aroused the colonists to the defense of their rights. He organized the Sons of Liberty, the forerunner of the Minute Men; he was a leader among the mechanics of Boston who were the heart and soul of the patriot party. He organized the first Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge in Massachusetts, and as an engraver his copper

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

engravings of political caricatures, portraits of patriots and the like, did much to arouse the spirit of patriotism. His most famous engraving is that of the Boston Massacre of 1770.

He was a goldsmith and a silversmith of great artistic ability, and his work in silver alone has earned him fame on its own account. He likewise was a dentist, was a soldier in the French and Indian War, and made cedar shingles by hand, the machine he used still being preserved in his home.

He was such an accomplished horseman that he early became the leading despatch rider of Massachusetts, and in one of his letters I find this paragraph concerning his activities in that direction: "In the year 1773, I was employed by the Selectmen of the Town of Boston to carry the account of the Destruction of the Tea to New York; & afterwards, 1774, to carry their dispatches to New York & Philadelphia for calling a Congress; & afterwards to Congress, several times."

He engraved and printed the first paper money of the Revolutionary government of Massachusetts; he was sent to Philadelphia to study powder-making late in 1775, and learned enough on one trip to establish a factory at Canton and direct the work. He became colonel of a regiment of artillery which defended Boston Harbor after the evacuation of Boston. He took part in the campaigns against Newport, 1778, and Penobscot, 1779, and he owned shares in the privateer, the *Speedwell*.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

In 1792, he opened a bell and cannon foundry in the town of Boston, and over seventy-five bells made by him are still in use in New England town halls and churches. He became an expert in the manufacture of copper and brass and obtained the government contract for the brass and copper work on the frigate *Constitution*, and also cast her ship's bell.

In 1801, at the age of sixty-six, he purchased the old powder mill at Canton and made it into a copper-rolling mill. He coppered the State House dome in 1802, and recoppered the bottom of the *Constitution* in 1803. He furnished the copper sheets for some of Fulton's first steamboat boilers. In addition to all these many activities, he found time to engage in local politics and do his share in holding offices toward building up the new republic.

His home at 19 North Square still stands, quaint in architecture, but plain and substantial. Paul Revere bought this house shortly after his marriage in 1770, just after he returned from serving in the French and Indian War as a second lieutenant of artillery. It is hard to realize that the house was one hundred years old when he purchased it, which makes it more than two hundred and fifty years old today, the oldest original house in Boston and one of the oldest in the entire country.

The house is not large; there are only four or five rooms, but they seem large and ample. The minute you enter the quaint old door and step into the big living-

PAUL REVERE'S HOME

room, you seem to be transported to another age. The floors are of wide planks, huge colonial fireplaces are found in nearly every room, and everywhere you turn you see evidences of the handicraft of the one-time master of the house.

Over the fireplace in the living-room hangs a murderous-looking flintlock rifle, with its powder-horn and bullet-pouch. I have no wonder that these rifles shot accurately! We see chairs made by the hand of Revere, candlesticks and silverware. In the adjoining kitchen, we find a spinning-wheel, a cradle, an old firebox to carry live coals for the purpose of "warming" the beds before retiring, and a peculiar device which we are told was the machine which Paul Revere invented for the purpose of making shingles.

There is an air of sturdiness and character within the place, and something of a mustiness, too, for the weight of the years hangs upon the old house. Withal, it reminds one a great deal of the Betsy Ross house in Philadelphia, although the latter is of brick construction. The Revere house, on the other hand, is of frame and so thoroughly seasoned that it presents a very great fire hazard, wedged as it is between two taller brick structures. Some steps should be taken at once to protect it from this danger of loss.

Standing as it does on North Square, it seems like an outpost of a departed day, and of a departed era. But it grimly hangs on, as it did in those days when its style of architecture was dictated by the danger of the Indians.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

For North Square has long since ceased to be the residential center of Boston, or even the business place of native sons. It is in the very heart of Little Italy, reeking with the odor of decayed vegetables and fruits, and alone and silent among a babble of alien tongues. I had literally to fight off the street urchins, jabbering an unintelligible tongue, as I took a picture of the house, and at one time they almost wrecked my camera. But such is progress, the eternal march of time!

CHAPTER XVI

ASHLAND, THE HOME OF
HENRY CLAY

ASHLAND

CALL it Fate or Chance or Destiny—what you will—but some men seem to be pursued by a sinister influence which thwarts their ambition and blocks their way to the reward which they often seem richly to deserve. Sometimes it is the things that men do that damn them; again, the things they don't do. And the more they seem to deserve better of life, the harder it is to reconcile ourselves to that which overtakes them. But in the end principle rules.

It rules our destiny as surely as the stars reflect their promise of light. It is the first and final test of a man; it touches him and as he receives the mark so he stands before the world through all time. It cannot be dodged, shirked, avoided. It rises up out of the path we all must tread, whether we be in the heights or depths of human existence. And a man is great in proportion to his ability to recognize principle and stand for it, regardless of consequences. Sometimes the mere willingness to stand for it, or stand aside for it, is all that is seemingly required. This means, in the end, the ability to value self for its rightful worth. To put self forward, or to seem to put it forward, is fatal.

Cæsar refuses the crown three times, but he hesitates so much that he loses all; Napoleon sacrifices principle, humiliates Josephine, and from that hour the "star" he loved to talk about commences to set; Henry Clay,

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

with the coveted Presidency within his grasp on at least two occasions, hesitates and compromises, explains and makes denials, and loses all.

For years, I had read about Ashland, the home of Henry Clay near Lexington, Kentucky, before I was privileged to visit it. I had caught references to it in many of the Great Commoner's speeches which chanced to fall into my hands. And many a distinguished personage of the day has mentioned it in correspondence left behind.

I expected much, and I was not altogether disappointed. If the shade of the "Old Prince" could return to Ashland today, however, he would probably shudder in astonishment. In the first place, the native ash trees he loved so much are all gone, ash not being a long-lived tree. Then, the real-estate promoters have taken off the strip of land lying between the city and the old plantation, and the city has literally bubbled up and slopped over until it runs right up to the doors of Ashland. Streets and tall houses set on tiny lots eat up the broad expanse comfortably between the city and the mansion in the old days.

Another disappointment came when Major Bullock, the present owner, told me that the mansion was not the original one, but that two years after Clay died it was torn down and rebuilt on the same foundations of the same materials, but with some alterations. Inquiry developed the fact that the walls had cracked and the mansion was condemned.



PLATE XVI. Ashland, the home of Henry Clay, at Lexington, Kentucky.

ASHLAND

Consulting some records of the times, however, I ran across some indignant charges made by certain members of the Clay family. It seems that one of Clay's sons returned from Missouri to Kentucky and bought the old house in order to liquidate the estate. He promptly tore down the mansion house, claiming it was unsafe, whereas others in the family claimed there was another reason, and that he really wanted to be spiteful, show off his skill in making the house more "artistic" and more in keeping with his own ideas. Be that as it may, even the family of a great man can sometimes show ordinary traits!

The mansion is of brick, a great towering hulk, built like a fortress and well covered with ivy. In the hallway I nearly ran into a false doorway until warned by my host. The glass is placed in this doorway, or rather mirror, so as to reflect another part of the hall and staircase in such a way as to utterly deceive one. It runs down to the floor and into the arch overhead. You do not see your own reflection until you are upon it. I imagine that Clay, with his well-known penchant for jokes, evidently considered that a good one upon his friends and guests.

The floors and woodwork are of ash, laid in quaint squares, much like the floors in the East Room at the White House. The big dining-room flanks a large glassed-in porch or veranda overlooking the bluegrass to the rear. Adjoining the dining-room to the left is a small alcove, octagonal-shaped and about ten feet in

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

diameter. It is shaped like an old-fashioned eight-sided lantern of the eighteenth century, the ceiling coming together at a point in the center overhead from which hangs just such a lantern. This was Henry Clay's library. The woodwork goes all the way to the top, and in recesses on all sides are the shelves upon which his books were kept. Knowing Clay's fault, I did not expect many books and found less than I expected.

Little else impresses one about the house as it stands today. Of course, there are a lot of Clay's trinkets about and a lot of other relics. You see portraits, too, but one or two curios do stick in mind. One is a silver glass tumbler from which Clay drank the various liquors produced on the plantation of which he was inordinately proud. I was told that five Presidents, Lafayette, and numerous others had taken their julep from the glass shown me. Then there is his elaborate inkstand, with the powder-cans and the glass of shot in which the quills were placed. Clay wrote a neat hand, preferring a light quill, and in his later days kept his own geese and manufactured his own pens.

Henry Clay was the first political leader in this country to develop a great personal following. Washington was admired from afar, but he had no following in the sense that we refer to, no parading, shouting, lionizing crowd of partisans. Clay was likewise the first politician to "swing around the circle," stumping the country from end to end.

He was the author of the protective tariff idea; one

ASHLAND

of the original exponents of the policy of internal improvements, but he is better known as the great compromiser on the slavery disputes which soon led the nation to the brink of dissolution. It is certainly safe to say that in the main his efforts were futile; he merely served to snatch up the burning firebrand and toss it into the lap of posterity.

No man in American politics ever seemed so much the child of fortune, and at the same time to be so illy treated by her. His career started before he came to legal age, in a great flash of promise and blaze of glory, and it ended more than fifty years later in disillusionment and bitter disappointment.

The first thirty years of his life read like the fiction of his own fevered imagination. At twenty he was a full-fledged lawyer before the bar at Lexington, Kentucky, whither he had just come from his native Virginia. At twenty-two he was married and already the leader of the bar, having the biggest practice in this, the then biggest western city. At twenty-nine, he was rated as being wealthy, so wealthy that he purchased six hundred acres of the finest land in the vicinity and built Ashland, a great mansion for those times.

Everywhere he was acclaimed like a god. His power over mankind through his voice and manner of address was nothing short of marvelous. He had a way of actually hypnotizing judges as well as juries, and so far as may be ascertained, never lost a criminal case,

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

including two successful defences of the notorious Aaron Burr. Acclaimed everywhere as a leader, almost as a deity, at a time when most young men are just getting a toe-hold, wealthy beyond his needs, with honors showered upon him, he was, indeed, the favorite child of fortune. Several months before he reached the constitutional age of thirty, the governor appointed him United States Senator to fill out an unexpired term, and he actually took his seat and served through one session before becoming of legal age. The wonder today is that he was not questioned, but it appears that the matter of age occurred to no one, Clay included.

In the War of 1812, and for many years thereafter, he was Speaker of the House of Representatives, then successively Senator, Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams, and Senator, with brief periods of retirement, until his death. He was a man who never lost a single political office he ever stood for, except the greatest prize of all, the Presidency. He seemed able to command at will anything he wanted, except that which he wanted most of all.

His character was a strange series of complexes and paradoxes. It is doubtful if a man in public life ever inspired his following with such devotion, such love, such loyalty; it amounted to worship. His personal appearance was not attractive, but it had that unusual quality which amounts to magnetism. His power of persuasion was so great, his emotional manner so electric that women commonly rushed around him,

ASHLAND

showering kisses upon his cheek, while men fought to wring his hand, following his speeches.

His greatest quality was his magnanimity, his spirit of fair play to his opponents, his inability to nurse a grudge or hatred. He was impulsive, imperious, high-strung, emotional. In the language of the times, he was "quick on the trigger," and, doubtless, this trait served to bring about his defeats. But he was quick to forget and forgive.

He was not a coward, nor lacking in boldness, yet there was a strange reflex in his character which, every time the Presidency was within grasp, caused him to hesitate, to temporize, to stumble—to seem to sacrifice his life-long principles in his anxiety for the prize—and to lose all. I would not say that in the pinches Henry Clay was unprincipled, but he did things which, at the time, seemed to indicate that he was, and this was just as fatal. Only history and time have disproved the assertion that he was a "trimmer." But he did lack the clearness of purpose and the boldness on these occasions so noticeable at other times.

He was accused of a corrupt bargain with Adams, whereby Clay was to defeat Jackson and elect Adams. The latter, in turn, was to make Clay his Secretary of State. It now appears that the charge was a fraud worked up by Jackson supporters to make it impossible for Clay to support Adams. But Clay did that very thing, and Adams made him Secretary of State, and Clay made the grave mistake of accepting.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

In the campaign of 1844, he seemed unable to keep from doing the things which forced his opponent in! His position on the annexation of Texas was well known by reason of his famous "Raleigh letter." This seemed to meet with the views of both wings of his party, and to define so safely his position on slavery as to win all save some of the more radical elements.

But Clay wanted to be sure; he wanted to be sure of the South, so he took up his pen and wrote two letters to a supporter in Alabama, which completely won the South, but lost the North, and another defeat was chalked up!

There was, in the pinches, that noticeable nervousness to advance self, to realize ambition, to temporize with principles to such an extent that people became suspicious of him, and enough turned away to destroy his chances of success. Henry Clay's career is a living example of the old adage, "He who hesitates is lost."

He was, on the whole, a great and lovable man. His heart was right and his whole life was devoted toward the improvement and the preservation of the Union. His love for the outdoors was very great; he loved country life with all the passion of a Virginia gentleman. He referred to himself constantly as a farmer, and his six-hundred-acre estate was the pride of his life. He was a lover of live-stock, his famous stud of horses having produced some of the greatest horses of history; his flocks of sheep, his dairy and poultry were all famous. His love for gardening was intense, being

ASHLAND

particularly fond of flowers, trees, and ornamental shrubs. Ashland, in his day, has been compared to paradise.

Time and again he left public service never to return to it, as he thought, but again and again ambition lured him away, and only ambition for the Presidency could do it.

I have already alluded to his early and easy success. It seems not to have spoiled him, but it did give him one habit which undoubtedly was at the root of many of his disappointments. He was not a very great student or reader. He belonged to that tribe having the unusual mental ability to quickly grasp the situation, which depends upon its own invention and circumstances to lead it over all difficulties. Clay never labored with books or in working out a solution of problems. He had the "gift of gab" and he depended upon his own imagination and the inspiration of the moment to carry him safely by all obstacles. He was, indeed, talented in this, and it carried him far.

He had none of the intensity of Calhoun nor none of his deadliness of purpose. Calhoun's mind was forever keyed up to one note, forever vibrating around a single purpose. Clay was the better man, the more congenial companion, the more popular idol and hero. He was the first of the typically American school of politicians with a great popular following at his heels. And, like the typical politician appealing to the masses, his love of applause, his desire to stay on top, often obscured

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

his mind to the real issues. He said, "I would rather be right than be President," but even in the saying of that he was merely playing politics!

He drank, gambled, fought duels, swore roundly on occasion, was quick-tempered, nervous, and emotional, but, above all, was his charming femininity! In debate or on the stump, his slim body swayed with his emotions like the slender reed in the breeze, his eyes blazing like those of the mountain lion. But in spite of his magnetism, in spite of his high purpose and real integrity, he had a weak spot in his make-up, and it denied him his dearest wish. In the end, principle stands.

CHAPTER XVII

WALDEN, THE RENDEZVOUS OF THOREAU

WALDEN

IT IS a truth of no mean proportion that we live for the good opinion of others. What our neighbors think of us and what we are doing, what we are accomplishing, is the ruling passion of our lives. Cynics may sneer at public opinion and appear to be strong and sturdy souls in the current of life, but in the end we all bow to the all-powerful thought of, "What do people say. . . ?" Like little drops of water, we whirl with the flood. Only a few men and women in each age are strong enough to wade upstream against this gigantic Niagara.

More men go down to what Ingersoll called the "tongueless silence of the dreamless dust" because they are willing to accept the valuation others place upon their effort than because such valuation is basically correct. Many a prophet has had to journey into a far land to secure a following; few business geniuses, even, have developed their talents near the parental roof. Neighbors have already given the stripling a valuation before he is out of knee trousers, and it is a curious anomaly that the valuation is always less than par. Most of us never scale the heights because we let the good folks who "know" us determine our place and our destiny.

Success is a matter of viewpoint; it rests largely in the satisfaction it brings to us at the end of the day's

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

toil and in the service which we have rendered humanity. They who keep holy that innermost man and live so as to win his approbation need not worry about the "failures" they are in the eyes of the world.

It was a hot Saturday afternoon in July when I went to Walden Pond, the scene of the only home Henry D. Thoreau ever owned. Walden Pond, in reality a good-sized lake, is located on the outskirts of Concord, Massachusetts, the original garden of the gods.

With what anticipation, what trembling eagerness, I purchased a sandwich or two and a few apples to take with me! For I had resolved to eat a meal there, at Thoreau's Cove, the woods about me, the pond spread out before me, in memory of the man who had lived at this spot in a little shack for two years and two months, because, as he said, "I had gotten myself appointed a business agent of the celestial empire."

The lunch under my arm, and a copy of "Walden" in my pocket, I took my time following the old road across the bottoms and up the hill to the pond. It was nearly two miles and somewhat hot, but that didn't matter. This road, here, these barren cutover stretches of wasteland, was the scene of many familiar descriptive passages I had lingered over these many years. I saw it in the springtime, "the threshold of eternity," Thoreau called it. I saw it in the bean-time of summer, in the murky strangeness of Indian summer, and in the twilight repose of winter—and I knew then why this strange man had found there sufficient occupation.



PLATE XVII. Walden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts, the rendezvous of Thoreau.

WALDEN

I located Thoreau's Cove without difficulty, recognized it from the descriptions thumbed many times in the book in my pocket, and after exploring in every direction for some time—a thousand eager quotations leaping in upon me from every tree and bush, from every stone touched or creeping root tripped upon—I returned and sank down upon the pine needles to thumb the pages again, to muse about it all, and, perhaps, test the author's accuracy of description!

There is no house of Thoreau's to visit here; the shack long since went up in flames, but we have the woods, the pond, and a pile of stones to mark the spot, and that is indeed sufficient. For the woods and the pond were more of Thoreau than any walls or roof ever raised about him. They gave expression to the wild note in his inner nature; they reflected himself to himself at every turn.

I thought of the man and what he had done, of the village over the hill yonder from whence he sprang—a village whose incessant buzzing in the pursuit of its daily affairs irked him so much that he borrowed an axe and came up here to test out his theory of living; I thought of the gossip he must have caused, of the taunts he endured, of the serene composure and singleness of purpose with which he carried on, and then my eyes dropped to some of his words spread out before me

I read: "I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour!"

His answer to those who wondered how he could live without the comforts of civilization in the woods! Better a few simple things, better life reduced to its lowest denominator than a superabundance purchased at the price of freedom. "Talk of a divinity in man!" he cries. "Look at the teamster on the highway; wending to market by day or by night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him? . . . Does not he drive for Squire Make-a-Stir? How godlike, how immortal is he?"

He gives us a chapter on clothing in which his darts are just as sharp and every one carries a barb on the end: "No man ever stood the lower in my estimation for having a patch in his clothes, yet I am sure that there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least clean and unpatched clothes, than to have a sound conscience." And again: "We know but few men, a great many coats and breeches. . . . I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes!"

His searchlight is turned on the subject of shelter, and out of that subject he pulls us up by the ears with a jerk: "I think that I speak within bounds when I say that, though the birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their holes, and the savages their wigwams, in modern civilized society not more than one-half the

WALDEN

families own a shelter." And again: "While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them. . . . On applying to the assessors, I am surprised to learn that they cannot at once name a dozen men in the town who own their farms free and clear. . . . The farmer is endeavoring to solve the problem of a livelihood by a formula more complicated than the problem itself. To get his shoestrings, he speculates in herds of cattle. With consummate skill he has set his trap with a hair-spring to catch comfort and independence and then, as he turned away, got his own leg in it."

Emerson somewhere says that "Now and then a man exquisitely made can live alone and must; but coop up most men and you undo them." How many men do you know who can spend an hour alone with themselves in perfect concord? How many, marooned for a night or a week in the woods or on a lonely shore, are terror-stricken, undone? How many can spend an evening alone with themselves? Left to our own devices, most of us find ourselves abominable bores; we shrink from solitude because it mirrors ourselves before us, and we discover ourselves for what we are.

Thoreau, commenting on his solitude in the woods in response to questions as to whether he was afraid, observes with telling sarcasm: "I believe that men are generally still a little afraid of the dark, though the witches are all hung, and Christianity and candles have been introduced!" And as if to clinch the nail he has

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

driven, he adds: "Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a new taste of that musty old cheese that we are. We have had to agree on a certain set of rules, called etiquette and politeness, to make this frequent meeting tolerable and that we need not come to open war. We live thick and are in each other's way, and stumble over one another, and I think we thus lose some respect for one another."

Thoreau saw with the clearness of a seer the grave inconsistencies of life as most of us live it; of the utter dedication of our lives to Mammon and the eternal search for power and pelf, at the expense of the leisure so necessary to develop the whole man. He shrank from the treadmill most of us voluntarily adopt; he saw us, not as successes living as we do in our great houses, busying ourselves with our many affairs, buzzing about in this or that social concourse—but as slaves and serfs who had bartered away our original freedom for a lot of tinsel and brass, for a mess of pottage or a many-roomed mansion.

With a fine bit of rhetoric, he likens many of his neighbors to the fakirs of India, chained as they are to forty acres of land, or pushing a big barn forty by seventy down the road of life ahead of them. "We are determined to be starved before we are hungry," he said. "Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and

WALDEN

so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. . . . It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents."

Thoreau's creed was to awaken those about him. Awake! he cried with all the savage note in his nature. Be free! Simplify, simplify your business of living! Gain time, the precious fruit of life, so that you may "saunter" and transact your business with the "celestial empire"—follow the longings of the inner man.

His Walden experiment was a physical demonstration of the fact that it is possible to earn enough to live upon in a few minutes' toil each day, the remainder of the day gained for leisure and reflection. But his savageness, in which he gloried as much as the timber wolf does in his howls of defiance at the winter moon, served to antagonize his own generation, so that, for the most part, his writings fell on deaf ears and he passed almost unknown outside a small circle of friends.

His "Walden" enjoyed a moderate success, and his second book, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," he was forced to publish himself. It fell flat and he had to take up surveying in order to pay for it. The other books which have appeared over his name were drawn from his journal and published after his death. He died in the midst of the Civil War, a victim of tuberculosis superinduced, no doubt, by the privations he forced himself to endure in his restless

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

search for the mysteries of Nature. He gloried to lie on the ground in storms, speculating on the teeming hidden world about him, which his fertile imagination populated with interesting characters. He died a young man, in his middle thirties—but a man who had made his mark on the times, a man who looms larger and larger on the literary horizon as the years pass and we come to judge him for the wild vagabond note he so charmingly placed in our literature.

On a grassy slope in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, I found a tiny gravestone with a single word on it. The gravestone marks the final resting-place of Henry David Thoreau, and the single word is: "Henry." It stands to one side a bit, alone and apart, but close by rest the ashes of the most remarkable literary set this nation has produced: Emerson, Hawthorne, the two Alcotts, father and daughter, and Channing. This spot has been called the Westminster Abbey of America.

Alone and apart! Ah, how true to the nature of the man! I imagine that even in death he glories in this implication of solitude and strength. To be able to stand on his own feet; to be foot-loose and free; that meant more than all the laurels and marble canopies that might be heaped upon him. He was the Daniel Boone of American literature.

He was distinctly a leader of those few souls who dare to go their own way and to chart their own course. The revolutionary strain was so strong within him that he might easily have been a more troublesome

WALDEN

character in history, but his Puritan strain held him to a high moral purpose, and he made little fuss in his own time. He came, not to destroy but to justify and to restore the old science and art of living.

While Thoreau is known chiefly as a naturalist, his observations in this field are not to be taken too literally. He made painstaking investigations in the fields and woods around Walden and Concord, sometimes overwhelming us with the great mass of irrelevant material found in his journals, but he was too much the child of his imagination to be accepted too completely in this direction.

Ever he was the agent of the "celestial empire," and however much he became enthusiastic over Nature, he always had one eye cocked on the other world. Like most naturalists, he sought to draw inferences from the things he observed, but he often drew the most hopeless of fallacious analogies—when his imagination soared, or his keenly-tuned ear was unduly charmed by the music of his sentence.

He could be blunt and practical at times—as terse and as calculating as one might expect any Yankee to be—but through all his bluntness, his charming speculations, his infectious enthusiasm for the world of Nature, runs his delightful literary tang—a flavor, a quality, which only Thoreau has ever imparted to the printed page.

Thoreau did much by his odd mental twists and the queer slant of his tongue to give all of us a new view of

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the affairs we fancy to be so important and vital. He indicted us before the awful court of Mother Nature, and he forces us to plead our own defense. Whether we care for Nature or not, we are forced to grant much that he charges.

And all those of us who feel the day's work pall upon us at times, who love the open places and who can stand our hours of solitude for the chance they give us to think out the things we want to think out, acknowledge the debt we owe him. He is the apostle of all vagabond souls or of all souls having a vagabond strain. He charted the way for us; he cared more for the approbation of his inner self than he did for that of those about him. He lived his own life, not for the good opinion of others. He was, indeed, a man.

CHAPTER XVIII

MONTICELLO, THE HOME OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON

MONTICELLO

AT MONTICELLO, as I stood on the front lawn looking from the mountain-top toward Shadwell, from whence Jefferson sprang, I thought how typically Jeffersonian it all was. Monticello means "Little Mountain," and here, on the flat top of it, where the great politician and reformer used to sit and dream as a boy—up where he was aside and apart from those about him, where his vision extended beyond the immediate hills to the distant horizon—he built his house and spent the greater part of his life in majestic reflection and laborious effort for those who dwelt beneath him.

Yet if he thought that by withdrawing to his hilltop he was to escape the acrimonious criticism which usually falls to the lot of the reformer and idealist, he was doomed to severe disappointment. Men in public life in America learn to accustom themselves to criticism—if they endure—for it is one of the prices paid by those who serve a democracy. Washington, Lincoln, and Wilson were the most severely maligned men our public life has produced, but Death, the Healer, came and bound up their wounds and now all that remains is the memory of the great things they did.

But Jefferson—ah, Jefferson! I know, in all the hidden annals of our history, no other case like his. Mention his name in almost any gathering and instantly

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

sides are taken and the campaign of 1800, with all its acrimonious accusation and chivalrous defense, leaps full-armed upon the canvas before our eyes. The passions aroused in that campaign will not down; they roll and swell in an unending chorus adown the years.

Hamilton, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Cleveland, and Roosevelt also aroused great enemies against themselves and added some heat to various campaigns, but almost with the fleeting breath of their bodies it all vanished when they, at last, were equals in death. But not Jefferson—not Jefferson, the man of peace, the political idealist, the tireless champion of democracy!

In that memorable September of 1800, he wrote to Benjamin Rush, this line: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." And they who come to liberate the mind of man! They, themselves, are given over as hostages, and seldom, if ever, is their ransom paid.

Charlottesville, Virginia, one hundred fifty-odd miles southwest of Washington, nestles in the foothills of the famous Blue Ridge. The soil is red and sandy, the hills surround it on all sides, and its quaint curved streets echo with the stirring of romantic history. Here lived Lewis and Clark, first to cross this continent; here lived George Rogers Clark, who won for us the Northwest Territory and freed Kentucky from the menace of the savage; and here lived and died Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence.

MONTICELLO

It was a clear and sunny day late in March when I made my pilgrimage to Monticello, a few miles from Charlottesville. I have already mentioned the fact that the mansion is located on top of a sizable "little mountain" from which the view is wonderful in every direction. The summit contains a flat tract of several acres, and it was there that the young Jefferson commenced to build his manor house in 1770. He was the architect of his own house, just as he was of his own fortunes for eighty-odd years, and it is recorded that some of the actual work of building was done with his own hands. The important point is that his plan was first made, then the house was built, a bit at a time, and he was not above doing some of the work himself, if necessary!

Monticello does not seem to be a large place, yet the mansion contains thirty-five rooms. Many of them are small, and there seems to be a multitude of halls. It has many distinctive features. The first thought of the visitor as he enters the big hall is a thrilling episode which it recalls. Tradition tells us, when Tarleton came to Charlottesville with his dragoons to capture the Virginia legislature and Governor Jefferson, that Jefferson was seated at the table in the dining-room, and they rode right into the hall on their horses.

They even saw the governor seated at the table, but by the time they had dismounted and went to grasp their prey, he had vanished as utterly as a ghost, through a secret passageway which led down through

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the lawn toward the stables, where he mounted a horse and escaped to Carter's Mountain. And the guide points out the marks of the horse-shoes on the floor of the hall, which certainly are there.

But I doubt that story. It seems more credible to believe the other one, which is to the effect that Jefferson was warned of the approach of the troopers, and kept an eye on them through his telescope, escaping in good season, and that he was not in the house at all when the troopers arrived. This, however, is immaterial. The incident did give rise to a lot of thin talk about "running away from the British" which has not been stopped down to this day. I imagine that anyone else under the circumstances would have escaped, if possible. Israel Putnam could run away from the British, even risk his neck over a steep cliff, and no one rises up to call him a coward. Even the great and noble Washington ran away from the British on numerous occasions, but I have heard of no one suggesting that it rendered him less capable of coming back again on other days to fight for the cause of freedom.

One of the rooms adjoining the entrance hallway on the right is the dining-room. When I looked into this room I was pleasantly surprised for, adjoining it, on a terrace overlooking the lawn to the rear and off toward the Blue Ridge in the other direction, is a perfectly appointed breakfast-room! It is just as well furnished as any breakfast-room you will find in a house of our

MONTICELLO

period, and it is, so far as I have found, the first breakfast-room in America. The dining-room is not large, but ample. The furnishings are simple in comparison with the average furnishings of the period.

Jefferson's bedroom is directly across the hall from the dining-room, and on the other side of it is his library and study. His bedroom is, however, a queer place and certainly reflective of a curious man. I have not yet reconciled myself to the bed as a place of repose for a strong and stalwart man. It looked more like the downy nest of a Marie Antoinette. It was not a poster bed, but a gorgeous thing in gold-leaf, fantastic and elaborate, with a great blue velvet hanging over the head and running up some eight to ten feet, tied with golden cords, and over the bedspread is a flimsy lace covering.

The great clock, however, one face in the hall, the other through the wall on the portico, expresses another nature of the many-sided genius who made these walls so eloquently express himself. Jefferson made that clock with his own hands. It is run by a series of cannon-ball weights, and to climb up to it, he made a queer folding ladder which stands like an iron pole in one corner. The key to this great clock looks like a flivver crank!

In another corner one is shown a folding violin stand which the author of the Declaration also made. It is a very creditable piece of furniture, made of walnut, and exhibits an amazing knowledge of the principles of

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

cabinet-making and the use of tools. I have, for the life of me, no doubt that the great champion of political liberty found relaxation in spending an hour or so evenings in the basement over his work-bench and kit of tools!

Hidden passageways and tunnels bisect the lawn in almost every direction, leading to the outside buildings, servant quarters, and law office. They may indicate one of two things: either an expression of the secretive and sensitive side of the man or a careful architectural study to subordinate everything to the mansion house, yet provide convenience in reaching other buildings without cluttering up the lawn with above-ground passageways.

Jefferson was not above the longings and doubts of the average mortal. In his retirement, he wrote: "I have sometimes asked myself whether my country is the better for my having lived at all. I have been the instrument of doing the following things, but they would have been done by others—some of them, perhaps, a little better." He goes on to set down all the things he had done in a long life which he thought worthy of listing on the affirmative side. They were: The opening of the Rivianna for navigation; the Declaration of Independence; the statute for religious freedom; the act putting an end to the law of entails; the act prohibiting the importation of slaves; the act establishing the natural right of man to expatriate himself at will; the act removing the law of primogeniture (course of descent



PLATE XVIII. Front view of Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson,
at Charlottesville, Virginia.

|

|

|

MONTICELLO

of property); the importation of olive trees and rice and the establishment of their culture in the South; and the act establishing public schools.

Having before us the estimate he placed upon his own accomplishments, we can now turn to a review of the long and eventful years which he spent in the service of his country. He was born in 1743 and was, therefore, eleven years younger than Washington. His father died when Thomas was fourteen years of age. He spent two years at William and Mary College and five years in the law office of George Wythe, the man who taught Henry Clay and others. It is worth noting that Patrick Henry studied law only six weeks before he was admitted to practice *on condition!* Jefferson gave five years of study before he felt willing to apply.

He practiced law for seven years until, as he wrote, the Revolution shut up courts of justice. He did not, however, like the law, and, as he grew older he developed a very pronounced dislike for lawyers. He once wrote a stinging comment on Congress which will not fall on unresponsive ears today: "How could it be otherwise in a body to which the people send 150 lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing and talk by the hour?"

His dislike was not induced by the fact that he failed as a lawyer. In his seven years' practice, the records show that he served in more than one thousand cases in court and that his average income during this time

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

was three thousand dollars per annum, a princely sum in those days.

He had long been prominent in the Virginia legislature, where he was most effective in committee meetings and where he secured that training in the writing of resolutions which brought him to the very forefront in the whole country. His apologies for the case of the Colonies were worth the value of hundreds of regiments and so clarified the issue of the struggle before the whole world that it made inevitable the support of all patriots.

At thirty-two he was elected a member of the Continental Congress, and he reached Philadelphia just in time to see Washington leave for Boston with his commission as General of the American Army in his breast pocket. At thirty-three he wrote the Declaration of Independence. From that hour until his death, fifty years later, he was in the very forefront. Destiny marked him that hour; had he done nothing else his fame would be secure; indeed, the luster of his name might be even brighter!

The Declaration made him governor of Virginia, which all but wrecked his political fortunes. Virginia, be it remembered, was the largest, richest, and most populous of all the Colonies. She was the bread-basket of the Revolution, and for several years the war had been fought outside her borders. She sent men, money, clothing, and foodstuffs in lavish quantities to the army in the North and one in the South. Finally, the

MONTICELLO

British generals, with fine perception, discovered that they couldn't hope to stop the argument until they had devastated Virginia and cut off the source of supply.

So they sent Arnold, the traitor, and Tarleton, the iron-heel, to teach Virginia the error of her ways. Jefferson, as governor, had just stripped the colony of men and munitions to help Greene in the South. He was caught in a humiliating position and could do nothing but retire before the foe. For that, a mighty chorus of incompetency went up, and the echoes are still flying. While Governor Jefferson "ran away from the British," it should also be remembered that every member of the legislature also ran, most of them as fast as their horses or legs could carry them. Tarleton all but grasped their coat-tails as he swept into Charlottesville that memorable June morning, 1781. Washington, however, had only praise for Jefferson's conduct in office, whereas some of our present-day historians cynically mention his "prancing to and fro" and send another double echo down the corridors of time.

Jefferson refused an appointment to Congress in 1781, but in time did accept a seat there to which he was elected in 1783, following the surrender of Cornwallis and the end of the war. While at this session he drafted the form of government of the Northwest Territory, securing the cession of the lands claimed by the various states to the Federal Government, an act which really made that government possible, and which has remained the model for territorial governments.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

He placed in this bill a clause prohibiting slavery in the new territory, but it was defeated largely by default because several states were not represented when the vote was called. Only three states voted against it, and a single vote in two delegations would have changed the result and prevented the Civil War. Had it passed, slavery would never have been an issue in this country. Jefferson wrote to his French friend, De Meusnier: "The voice of a single individual would have prevented this abominable crime from spreading itself over the new country. Thus we see the fate of millions unborn hanging on the tongue of one man, and heaven was silent in that awful moment."

In 1784 he was sent to Paris as a special envoy to break down trade barriers and did not return until late in 1789, after serving four years as our minister to France, succeeding Franklin. While in Paris his diplomacy did much to arouse the powers against the insolence of the Barbary pirates, but his plans did not come to fruition until nearly fifteen years later when he dispatched our fleet to the Mediterranean to deal single-handed with them. He had much to do with the growth of the republican movement in France, and his counsel aided the radicals a great deal in developing public opinion behind them. Jefferson's unofficial advice and counsel did much in shaping the development of the French Revolution.

He returned to Monticello for a brief visit, but upon landing found that Washington had nominated him to

MONTICELLO

be Secretary of State in his cabinet. This position he accepted on the former's earnest solicitation, much preferring to return to France. The decision marked a turning-point in his whole career and led to a series of political controversies which culminated in the overthrow of the Federalist Party.

The difference of opinion with Hamilton is well known to every student of history, but it was a difference, nevertheless, which has been vastly misrepresented and misunderstood. Jefferson has been charged with antagonism for the Constitution and a hatred for Hamilton because he had much to do with securing a central form of government. The lie can be given to this charge out of many of Jefferson's own writings. He was heartily for the Constitution and wrote from France that all it needed to make it beyond criticism was a specific enumeration of the common rights of citizens. These were specifically set out in the first ten amendments at Jefferson's direct suggestion. He wrote Madison especially commending the Constitution for the division of the governing power into three heads. As for a central government, he thought it "most desirable" and necessary, but he desired to reserve much of the government in the people themselves, believing the township, being nearest the people, should transact as much of the business as possible. He feared the delegation and centralization of power on the part of the people because in time it would be lost utterly to them.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

His quarrel with Hamilton was a disagreement over the means which should be used to gain a similar end. Jefferson had every confidence in the mass of the people, and he ever stood firm in that faith. One day, in one of the many stormy sessions they had in cabinet meeting, Hamilton shouted, "Your people, sir," bringing his fist down on the table, "is a great beast!" Jefferson was keenly sensitive. He did not hate Hamilton, but he feared him and more especially his contempt for the small farmers, the artisans, the small traders, and lower classes whom Hamilton referred to as "the mob." Hamilton's admiration for the monarchical forms of government was alarming to a confirmed Democrat like Jefferson. In time, he left the cabinet and returned to Monticello, where he took up the most amazing campaign ever conducted by an individual in history.

Through correspondence and the influence of newspapers, he commenced quietly to rally the friends and followers he had won to resist the Federalist Party. His thought was to bore quietly, plucking off a county here, a district there, a congressman, a legislature, eventually the nation. More than 16,000 of these letters remain to us.

Gradually his power began to be felt. Never in the open himself, but quietly keeping alive the struggle by his enormous correspondence, his tireless vigilance. In 1798, he won the congressional elections, and then the smoldering spark of hatred began to leap into a

MONTICELLO

fierce flame as his opposition at last discerned his hand. By the time of the campaign of 1800, things were at a white heat, but in the meantime Jefferson had returned to public office as Vice-President, sitting at a vantage point where he could greatly discomfort his enemies.

The campaign of 1800 definitely committed our politics to party movements. Jefferson demonstrated that an effective organization sweeps all before it, and I doubt if a more bitter national campaign was ever fought. The personal life and habits of the Sage of Monticello were distorted and magnified out of all proportion. Above personal reproach, his authorship of the bill for religious freedom was seized upon to prove that he was an infidel and atheist. Old ladies in Connecticut hid their Bibles under the fear that, if elected, he would order them destroyed.

He was, on the whole, the greatest practical reformer the world ever saw. I have tried in vain to think of a man who accomplished more far-reaching reforms in his lifetime than Jefferson. He won with logic and argumentation more than dozens of reformers have won with the sword; and how many great reformers have been only as John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness, never to see their projects accomplished.

Was his country the better for his having lived? The answer is short: Cut out all he put in our governmental fabric, and it would collapse over night; our system of jurisprudence would be thrown back into the Dark Ages; our territory would shrink to the east of the

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Mississippi—we would be like a rudderless ship creeping in the fog.

He was a very great character, and I bury my politics when I say this. His intellect was powerful and penetrating; his inventive turn highly developed. He was an accomplished violinist, an inventor, an architect of no mean ability, a shrewd lawyer, an able politician, a clear and convincing writer, a scholar and lover of literature, art, and sculpture.

He loved nature and country life with an intense passion. He was sweet and pure and refined, a handsome man of sandy hair and eyes flecked with hazel. His sixty years in the service of his country exhausted his fortune, and his years in retirement were spent in a superhuman effort to hold title to his beloved Monticello. He was forced to sell his library of 30,000 volumes to Congress, to borrow money, and sustain one loss after another. His body was hardly interred in its grave until creditors stepped in and drove out his heirs.

When John Adams came to die on that memorable July 4, 1826, late in the afternoon, he murmured with his last breath: "Thomas Jefferson still lives!" Jefferson had died at noon that day, but Adams knew it not. "Thomas Jefferson still lives!" Ah, how well the venerable Adams spoke! How well, indeed! Thomas Jefferson still lives, and may his passion for the great mass of our citizenry live on with him!

CHAPTER XIX

ELMWOOD, THE HOME OF
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

ELMWOOD

AT ELMWOOD I was more than thrilled at the great privacy of the place. Although it is located on a corner where two streets intersect in the old town of Cambridge—busy streets, too—once inside the gate you are lifted bodily out of the hurried affairs of men and are transported to the leisurely retreat of one of our greatest poets and nature lovers.

I was photographing a scene on the lawn when a little girl came up to watch the operation. She was very quiet and serious, and very pretty.

“Are you taking a picture of my house?” she asked, shyly.

“Yes,” I answered. “And so this is your house?”

“Yes, sir. Isn’t it a nice house?”

“Indeed it is, little lady. What do you like best about it?”

“Well,” she sighed, thoughtfully, “I think I like the lawn and the trees the best.”

We gravely discussed many other points about the house as I worked, but we agreed on none so well as on the above. When I bade her adieu and had told her how homesick she made me for little Marilee (at which she blushed becomingly) and we had arrived at a consideration for her to remember me by, I carried away, stamped in imperishable form on my mind, the beauty and privacy of the place.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Walking along the cinder paths which flank the streets, one would not guess that behind this enormous hedge of shrubs and lilacs was such a broad expanse of open lawn framing such a quaint and historic old house. One cannot see through the protecting hedge, except at the old gate. And at the gate, Elmwood, the birthplace and home of James Russell Lowell, house of many shutters, ancient as the trees almost, meets the eye.

Here Lowell spent his boyhood, a happy, well-rounded youth which is the heritage of the average American boy. He romped on the great lawns, sprawled under the shade of the elms, or roamed the wooded countryside, and on warm August afternoons doubtless hot-footed it to the refreshing coolness of the nearby Charles River, pulling his shirt as he ran.

While Elmwood is now in the center of a busy, hurried city life, in Lowell's boyhood it was far out on the edge of Cambridge. It was, in fact, a country seat, and the park to the rear was a part of the agricultural domain of the estate. That it all made an impression upon the boy cannot be doubted, and that that impression was favorable we gather from a note he wrote to a friend in New York City just as he was turning thirty years of age. The references to Elmwood and its surroundings prove that the quiet wealth of country life had not palled on him but had, in fact, struck a responsive chord.

He wrote: "Last night . . . I walked to Watertown over the snow, with the new moon before me and a sky



PLATE XIX. Elmwood, the home of James Russell Lowell, at Cambridge, Massachusetts

ELMWOOD

exactly like that in Page's evening landscape. Orion was rising behind me, and, as I stood on the hill just before you enter the village, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the tinkle of a little brook which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch it. My picture of the brook in Sir Launfal was drawn from it. But why do I send you this description—like the bones of a chicken I had picked? Simply because I was so happy as I stood there and felt so sure of doing something that would justify my friends."

I have said somewhere that we live for the good opinion of others. Here we find Lowell on the threshold of great achievements, and, in the strength and exuberance of youth, proving it. He was happy, not so much in the presence of the delicious panorama spread out at his feet as he was in the consciousness of power which it brought to him—a power that would send him far, and thus "justify my friends!"

And in this Lowell was not only true to his own philosophy of life but decidedly human and decidedly true to the aspirations and impulses of those about him. We all subscribe to the doctrine of aspiration, to the will to achieve. We all dream great dreams, and none so great as the one where we subdue the world and place it in the palm of our hands for the approbation of our friends.

Say what we will, environment exerts an enormous influence over our lives. I never appreciated it to the full until I commenced to visit the homes of great men

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

and women and have noted how accurately the houses they lived in expressed their characters. But in the case of Lowell we have a powerful argument, for it was not only his home during his active years but his birthplace and boyhood home as well.

It is a great and substantial house, built in 1767, before the stirring days of '76, and the sort of a house which would give anyone in the community a sense of security and leisure coveted by all men. But the greatest thing about it is its rugged severity and four-square simplicity. It would be positively repelling outside the majestic setting in which it is placed, and it was that very thing which caused it to exert the greatest influence upon Lowell.

It mirrored, as it were, Nature in all her power and subtle suggestiveness. And in bringing to the young Lowell an enthusiastic worship of Nature, it performed a powerful mission. One cannot sit at the feet of Nature long and not read therein lessons of living valuable and priceless. One cannot court the mistress of the universe and fail to extract from her some of the fragrance of life, some of the nectar of the gods.

And so young Lowell, an apt pupil, was taught at the hands of the greatest pedagogue of all. The lessons he learned were universal in their application, and out of them grew the acceptance he gained at the hands of the world.

Had Lowell written nothing else save "The Vision of Sir Launfal," his fame would be secure. I consider it

ELMWOOD

the greatest thing he ever produced, and while my estimate, doubtless, will not greatly disturb the literary world, I rank it with the five greatest poems America has given to literature. He was in his thirtieth year when it appeared, and although he personally valued his "Fable for Critics" higher, the fact remains that "Sir Launfal" is the best known to the reading public at large of anything he wrote.

It is refreshing, in digging into his life, to find him revealed as an active, energetic, ambitious man. So often we look askance at our poets, feeling that they are cold, leisurely, unhurried. Lowell had that divine discontent, that fire for achievement, that enthusiasm that is infectious. We smile and even thrill as we read his enthusiastic self-praise, as he wrote to his friend Charles F. Briggs in December, 1846:

"But why do I not say that I have done something? I believe that I have done better than the world knows yet; but the past seems so little compared with the future . . . I am the first poet who has endeavored to express the American Idea, and I shall be popular by and by."

Again, in sending to Mr. Briggs the first part of his "Fable for Critics," after giving explicit directions as to the manner in which the copyright is to be taken out, he writes: "I am making as particular directions as if I were drawing my will, but I have a sort of presentiment (which I never had in regard to anything else) that this little bit of pleasantry will *take*. Perhaps I

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

have said too much of the Centurion. But it was only the comicality of his character that attracted me—for the man himself personally never entered my head. But the sketch is clever!”

Lowell had a very great impulse for satire, which sprang from his unfailing good humor and happiness. But satire is a dangerous tool for an artist to use who seeks popularity. While we generally pride ourselves on our sense of humor, it is often a very primitive sense. Unless our jokes are the essence of simplicity, we are likely to laugh at the wrong place and then suffer the extreme mortification that always follows; and again, under certain moods we fail to grasp the more subtle forms of humor at all. Satire is perhaps the highest type of the more subtle humor and a deal of the time it overshoots the mark. Instead of making everyone laugh, it amuses a few and outrageously offends others. In the bulk, we Americans prefer the loud, boisterous, guffawing type of humor—slap-stick—and the writer who plays with satire or irony is apt to find that he has looked down the barrel of a loaded gun, all primed and cocked.

Lowell put this quality of satire into nearly everything he wrote. We find him making fun of Thoreau, when it seems that he was really trying to treat him kindly, and even in “Sir Launfal” I detect a quality of fine satire directed at Tennyson, who, about the time it was written, was producing his ballads of King Arthur’s court. The fact that Lowell took a knight and wove his

ELMWOOD

poem around the times and labeled as a legend the story of the Holy Grail is, indeed, a neat thrust at the then prevailing literary drift.

Aside from this, "Sir Launfal" takes the measure of Lowell and is the one most widely known poem that he produced. In it flashes out his youthful exuberance and clean attunement to the whole universe. That he either borrowed from Emerson, or heard with the same keen ear the universal dictum of the law of compensation, cannot be doubted when we read:

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

Then follow the famous and justly popular lines, "And what is so rare as a day in June?" the best known of Lowell's work; lines that reflect deeply his keen sense of the cosmic fitness of Nature; lines that sparkle with the tremendous surge of life about us. And out of it all, he draws that great thought which has so lately come home to the world; namely, that in self-service only can we find real happiness. It is as old as

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the Golden Rule, but it needs a poet like Lowell to reaffirm it again and again for a busy, bustling world engaged in the business of bartering lives for "bubbles." It brings us up again to the true sense of values; it deflects life into the old channels and aids in arresting the progress of prodigality—if we but listen.

Although Sir Launfal knew it not, until he had spent his life and his substance in a blind search for the figurative Grail, it was right at his castle door all the time. He tosses a piece of gold to the leper in scorn, and the leper observes:

He gives only the worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
The thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs thru all and doth all unite—
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before.

In other words, it isn't the gift but the giver that the world wants and needs. Not your word, or your wealth, or your approbation—but you, yourself! Launfal, old, penniless, undone, at last returns and then his ears hear the magic words and he finds the real Holy Grail. How often is it true that the happiness we seek is within ourselves; the treasure we covet, at our feet. The poet puts it in these lines:

ELMWOOD

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor and me.

Service is the keynote of our present way of living. We have come to know that unless something of the personality of a business, for instance, goes into the transaction that the business will not survive. We are here, not for gain, not for self, but for service—to do what we can for others that we, in turn, may find happiness and prosperity. In other words, the way of competition is the way of strife and defeat; the way of cooperation and mutual understanding is the way of happiness and secure usefulness.

Lowell lived an intensely active life for one who so early chose a literary career. In 1854, one year after the death of his first wife and five years after his fame as a poet had been made secure, he was appointed to the chair of Belles Lettres at Harvard where he served for many years. He edited the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1857 until 1861. From 1864 until 1872 he was editor of the *North American Review*.

Throughout the slavery fight and during the Civil War, his pen was ever active and vigorous in the cause of anti-slavery. His Biglow Papers published in the interests of this cause were, in reality, political preachments. He spent a good share of his later years

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

in diplomatic service, filling the post of Minister to Spain and Ambassador to the Court of St. James with credit and honor. Eight years were spent in this work, and he returned to America, in May, 1885, following the death of his second wife. The remaining six years of his life were spent at Elmwood, in travel and in writing.

In this house, where he was born and where he lived most of his life and where he died, was fostered one of the finest spirits which America has contributed to literature. The message he brought to the world was a message of reassurance, a message of enthusiasm and good cheer. He thrilled at the goodness of life, and at the thought that the worthwhile things are still to be had for the asking. The note he emphasized is the note most prevalent in all of our natures and we have all sensed it, and felt it and thrilled at it. It is as old as the stars and it will still be new when the last man and the last woman stand on this earth and watch the sun on its last journey to the West.

CHAPTER XX

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

IN FAIRMOUNT PARK, Philadelphia, near William Penn's house, some workmen were leveling off the broad terrace, preparatory to sowing grass seed. In the little garden at the rear of the ancient country seat, other men were pulling a few stray weeds. Somehow, that sight thrilled me and I said: "What a joke this is on the good folks 'who knew him *when . . . !*'"

There used to be a boy in our community when I was a boy who was held up to all the other boys as a woeful example of the kind of a boy not to be. He had run away from home two or three times; he used to play hookey from school on occasions when Fate unkindly drew the ire of the teacher upon him. Then, he wouldn't go home for days, sleeping out in deserted houses, because of the whipping he knew his father would administer.

He was a "bad" boy; a scourge to all of us; a boy to be avoided. I remember how the old heads used to nod, and how old tongues used to curl and snap and bite into this boy's reputation, like the forked tongues of a thousand snakes. But I was drawn to him by some strange fascination; perhaps because he had the independence to follow his inclinations.

I found that he was not a "bad" boy, but a fine, healthy chap with a wonderful quality of sensitiveness.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Fear of a whipping, and that only, drove him to stand the lesser fear of the darkness and sleep out in deserted houses; fear of the taunts of his fellows, who might see him humiliated, drove him to endure their lesser back-biting. I came to love him for his wonderful temperament, his fine, open regard for the better things in life, and I have loved him to this day. I do not know where he is now, but wherever he is, he is a success. And some day the good folks in that little community will open their eyes, and when they see the world at his feet, they will say, "Well, I declare! I knew him when he was the oneriest, good-for-nothing little rascal in the whole town! Can you imagine *him* ever setting the world on fire!"

Bad boys are no respecters of parents. Sometimes they get themselves born into the "best families," and then there is a real rumpus raised to the high heavens. I don't know why it is that members of the best families can't get over the idea that they have to meddle so much in the destinies of their children. The man of the street is very likely to let the boy do as he likes in the matter of work, just so long as he gets out of the way and earns his own keep.

But those parents who have a page in a pedigree book to keep, or a family crest to hand down, or a reputation or title, forever meddle with the youngsters. I suppose it is just as well. We thereby get a fair proportion of stalwart souls from both classes. Resistance stiffens the opposition and the backbone of small boys.



PLATE XX. William Penn house, in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

Opposition backed by an imperious attitude has sent many a fine man to the heights of fame.

William Penn was a "bad" boy. He absolutely scandalized the set into which he was born by some things he did and some other things which he refused to do. He so mortified his father, Vice-Admiral Sir William Penn, by his rebellious disposition that the latter finally swore a whole broadside of right hearty sailor oaths, and threw him out of the house. And to make a good job of it, he disowned the boy and cut off his inheritance. Then he took a pinch of snuff and swore some more.

The schemes of parents, however, have a way of getting sidetracked unless they be founded upon sympathy and love. The trouble is that so many parents are not content to live their own lives, but they want to live the lives of their children, too. They seem to think that this is their one chance to live down their own disappointments. If the father wanted to be a lawyer and the struggle for existence forced him to be a butcher, he is determined that the boy shall study law. Perhaps the boy would rather manufacture fish-hooks. The mother always wanted to be a minister's wife, but her father compelled her to marry the man she did because he owned a farm, or a city lot, or was getting two hundred per—"more" than any minister could ever earn. Either way you take it, something is bound to happen. The child will develop some spunk and cause the sparks to fly, or he will be crammed down

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

into the selected little groove and be doomed to disappointment and mediocrity.

Then, there is the other kind of parent, the smug, respectable fellow who basks in his own prominence and is determined that his namesake shall be just the same kind of a man, in the same old musty way, that he is. Vice-Admiral Sir William Penn wore an ostrich plume in his plush hat, and it is needless to say that his vanity was well filled with plumes.

I do not recall that as an admiral he ever greatly distinguished himself. It is entirely possible that he was one of those officers who bought his commission with a bag of gold. Certainly, he never fired any shot which caused very many echoes to reach us; no great battle did he ever win. He is famous because he was out-generaled in his own household by a stripling bearing his name; famous because he was the father of a "bad" boy who said "Thee" and "Thou," and who refused to take off his hat in the presence of Sir William and His Britannic Majesty, the King!

We owe a great deal to bad boys, against whom the hand of Society is often raised. It is an interesting speculation just how much we owe them. I wish some of these experts who deal in complexes and reflexes and the like would compile a volume which would tell us just how much we owe. It would rock the old world from stem to blossom end.

We owe to William Penn at least half of the freedom we enjoy in this country today. Political liberty,

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

without religious freedom, would be a snare and a delusion. And the religious liberty which is a part of the fundamental law of the land traces an ancestry right back to sturdy little William Penn, who, as a boy, was willing to go the hard way and compromise with no man on his own beliefs.

William Penn house, in Philadelphia, is said to be the oldest brick house in the City of Brotherly Love. It is also said that the brick was imported from England. I rather like the suggestion that one writer has made regarding this. If all the colonial houses in this country which are claimed to have been built of imported brick were loaded into ships today, the world's available shipping would be tied up for several months. This is, perhaps, an exaggeration, but be that as it may, Penn's house evidently did come from English kilns.

It is also said that the house was the first capitol of Pennsylvania. Some say it was Penn's country estate; others, that it belonged to his granddaughter; others, that it was moved from downtown and was his town house; still others draw you off to one side and solemnly whisper in your ear that William Penn never had any association with it at all. I hurried out of town for fear someone would tell me William Penn was just a legendary character who had been adapted from Gulliver or Æsop!

The house is narrow—eighteen feet or so wide and perhaps thirty feet long. You enter into a rather small room, but large for the size of the house. This was the

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

council chamber, so inscriptions on the wall will tell you, but the floor is cemented, which rather spoils the illusion of time. The city has provided some old prints for the walls, whitewashed the hall and walls inside, and doubtless put in the cement floor. But it has also thoughtfully locked up the upstairs and the downstairs, with the exception of two rooms and a narrow hallway.

I like the small fireplace. I could fancy William Penn before it gazing into the logs and formulating some of the great precepts for the government of his vast domains, which have come on down to us in our fundamental law. Perhaps he chuckled when he thought back over it all—how he came to possess the great colony, and what Charles II said when he signed the charter.

✱ Sir William was such a good friend of the monarch that Charles had borrowed sixteen thousand pounds sterling (about \$80,000) from him. Even the friendship and favor of kings has its price! Sir William was never able to collect. It isn't good politics to press for payment in a case like that. The king might take it into his head to help himself to the rest of the estate.

But when Sir William died and young William came into the estate, he had another view of the matter. Although Charles had put him into the Tower for nine months on one occasion for publicly announcing that he was a Quaker, and had allowed him to be imprisoned at Newgate on another occasion for six months, still he liked the lad.

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

The persecutions of the Quakers gave the younger Penn his great chance. He knew the Quakers; he knew how absurd it was to punish them for their simple faith, and with all the zeal and ardor of youth, he saw a great opportunity to try an experiment. Men who get into jail and who have any brains at all always burn with a desire to reform and reorganize Society. Witness Bunyan, Napoleon, and William Penn!

So he went to Charles II and presented a demand for repayment of the sixteen thousand pounds sterling. Charles was financially embarrassed then, as always, and couldn't pay. Then someone suggested, doubtless on Penn's own instigation, that it would be a good joke to pay the boy in Western land; two desirable things would be accomplished, the debt extinguished and the realm ridded of an undesirable character.

Penn took the offer on certain conditions, which he enumerated in a lengthy document called a Charter. Among these conditions were that he could establish a colony for Quakers, where entire religious liberty would never be abridged; that he was to have the entire right of government of the new colony. Charles II affixed his signature, the great seal of England was attached, and the merry monarch had many a good laugh over it. To pay in Western land used to be a real funny joke.

It was in 1681 that this occurred. That same summer three shiploads of Quakers hurried to the land of promise, upon Penn's glowing offers of peace and

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

happiness and freedom. He drew up the form of government, a form which gave Jefferson his famous phrase, "That government is best, which governs the least." It was liberal to a fault, and the people were even allowed to adopt or reject it as they saw fit.

From that time on, the growth of Pennsylvania was tremendous. The colony then included most of New Jersey in addition to the present state. Penn came over and established his capital at the juncture of the Schuylkill and the Delaware rivers. He insisted upon absolute fairness with the Indians, and for more than seventy years, as long as the colony belonged to the Penns, not a war-whoop was ever heard or a single settler harmed. A Quaker's dress was better protection than a regiment many times during this interval.

Penn proved that even the idea of brotherly love can be made to work, if given a fair chance. It was a noble experiment, one the world was in great need of seeing tried, and its success proves with what eagerness the world turns to the man who has the courage to stand for great ideals and the honesty to carry them out, when the power lies in his hand.

That Penn was worthy is beyond question. His great goodness of character stood him in need. His relations with his people were always pleasant and cordial. The Indians loved him with great devotion, and he, in turn, loved humanity with an abiding passion.

William Penn, in spite of the neighbors, had subdued

WILLIAM PENN'S HOUSE

self, although he knew that self was worthless if it could not be used to assert belief in a principle. Some of his utterances form the choice thoughts of religious, legal, and ethical literature which we have.

He died and was buried in England, and there is no better index to his character nor better epitaph for his tomb than the words he uttered to the Indians in his first council: "My friends, we have met on the broad pathway of good faith. We are all one flesh and blood. Being brethen, no advantage will be taken on either side. When disputes arise, we will settle them in council. Between us there shall be nothing but openness and love." And the offer was met more than half way, as such offers are always met, and the Indians replied: "While the rivers run and the sun shines we will live in peace with the children of William Penn."

No more warlike foe in all history ever existed than the American Indian. His whole training, his whole organization for life, was founded upon the theory of war. It was his creed, his way of life, his method of life, yet he accepted the theory of cooperation, of mutual conference and arbitration as readily as it was offered.

To keep his pledge he had to subdue and brush aside all of his heredity, all of his standards of action and conduct. He was not aided by the morals of "civilization," by an organized public opinion; to him, it was a complete overturning of all that had gone before in his own experience.

Penn's council and the fruits it bore testify to the

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

innate brotherhood of man, irrespective of background and training. His experiment proved to the world that in the theater of action there is a more sensible and harmonious way of settling differences of opinion and conduct than through the club or the rifle. The world has not yet caught up with him and his redskin neighbors in this particular.

We owe to him the tenet of religious liberty, one of the elements in our political life which has made for peace and good-will among the peoples under our flag. We owe to him the example that great works may be hazarded and brought to fruition through amicable adjustment and conference. We owe to him the example that even a polyglot and unlettered society, approached in a broad spirit of confidence, is capable of its own government.

Thus, the bad boy became the instrument of Providence, and "did his bit" in the interest of civilization, a bit which has meant more to the peace of society than any single fragment of our legal structure.

CHAPTER XXI

WAYSIDE, THE HOME OF
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

WAYSIDE

I HAD just come from the Concord School of Philosophy which Louisa M. Alcott financed for her visionary father, and which is located in the rear of her Orchard House. As I passed up the old Lexington Road, I was greatly intrigued by a path leading up the steep side of the hill.

I am glad that I followed this path, for part way up the hill I found a granite boulder on which had been placed a bronze tablet, and on it I read these words: "This tablet placed at the centennial exercises, July 4, 1904, commemorates Nathaniel Hawthorne. He trod daily this path to the hill to formulate, as he paced to and fro upon its summit, his marvelous romances." No admirer of the works of the great romancer could read those words and fail to climb the path to the summit of the hill. For upwards of an hour I played at "pacing to and fro." I fancied that I could see Hawthorne there in the early sunlight of the day, his hands clasped behind him, his coat-tails catching the wind, a troubled expression upon his handsome face. I could understand some of the problems which struggled within him, for expression and understanding always breed a great sympathy. No one could know Hawthorne and not love him, but few indeed ever knew him.

Visiting the home of Nathaniel Hawthorne is a

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

perplexing undertaking for the reporter. Hawthorne lived in so many different houses during his lifetime, and each house played such an important part in the unfolding of his career that one hardly knows which place to select as being typical of the man and of his temperament.

There are three or four houses in Salem, including his birthplace, where he lived at different stages of his career, and, in Salem, Hawthorne first tasted the joy of fame and success. Here he wrote the romances which have been selected by competent critics as the best he produced. Among them are "The House of the Seven Gables," "The Scarlet Letter," and numerous shorter pieces.

Then, again, in western Massachusetts, at Lenox, he occupied a small red wooden house near the Stockbridge Bowl. Here he produced his "Wonder Book," "Tanglewood Tales," and sketched out the first part of "The House of the Seven Gables."

But it is in Concord that I seemed to find more of the personality of the man and the environment which so remarkably expresses him. For a time he lived at the Old Manse. Indeed, it was in this house, where he came shortly after his marriage, that he actually began his literary career. While there he produced his justly famous "Mosses from an Old Manse" and pursued other literary activities, among them the editing of a literary periodical which he and some of his friends had undertaken. The Old Manse had been the home of



PLATE XXI. Wayside, Hawthorne's Concord home

WAYSIDE

Ralph Waldo Emerson's grandfather. The old clergyman lived in the house when the battle was fought where was fired "the shot heard 'round the world." The old gentleman watched the progress of the battle from his study window, the bridge being not more than one hundred and fifty yards from the house. Hawthorne the man, is revealed, I believe, as fully in "Mosses from an Old Manse" as in anything else he ever wrote. It contains, on almost every page, flashes of his genius and hints of the heights to which he was to rise.

Hawthorne was, above all else, the slave of his imagination. He had much rather muse upon the effect of environment and probe the development of these characters than to engage in the heat and tumble of active life himself.

As I sat under a tree on the summit of the great ridge towering above Wayside, his home for the last few years of his life, I reread again this instance which he recounts in his sketch on the Old Manse and which gives an admirable index to his own mental processes. Hawthorne is describing the graves of the two British soldiers killed at Concord Bridge:

"Lowell, the poet, as we were once standing over this grave, told me a tradition in reference to one of the inhabitants below. The story has something deeply impressive, though its circumstances cannot altogether be reconciled with probability. A youth in the service of the clergyman happened to be chopping wood that April morning at the back door of the manse; and

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

when the noise of battle rang from side to side of the bridge, he hastened across the intervening field to see what might be going forward. . . . The tradition says that the lad now left his task and hurried to the battle-field with the ax still in his hand. The British had by this time retreated, the Americans were in pursuit, and the late scene of strife was thus deserted by both parties. Two soldiers lay on the ground; one was a corpse, but as the young New Englander drew nigh, the other Briton raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees and gave a ghastly stare into his face. The boy—it must have been a nervous impulse, without purpose, without thought, and betokening a sensitive and impressible nature rather than a hardened one—uplifted his ax and dealt the wounded soldier a fierce and fatal blow upon the head. I could wish that the grave might be opened, for I would fain know whether either of the skeleton soldiers has the mark of an ax in his skull.

“The story comes home to me like truth. Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood-stain, contracted, as it had been, before the long custom of war had robbed human life of its sanctity, and while it still seemed murderous to slay a brother-man. *This one circumstance has borne more fruit for me than all that history tells us of the fight.*

“Many strangers come in the summer-time to view

WAYSIDE

the battleground. For my own part, I have never found my imagination much excited by this or any other reason of historic celebrity, nor would the placid margin of the river have lost any of its charm for me had men never fought and died there."

He goes on to describe the field intervening between The Manse and the battleground, and mentions in some detail the Indian arrow-heads which are to be found there, speculating on the Indian village which once was there. And then he says: "It can hardly be told whether it is a joy or a pain, after such a momentary vision, to gaze around in the broad daylight of reality and see stone fences, white houses, potato-fields, and men doggedly hoeing in their shirt sleeves and homespun pantaloons. But this is nonsense. The Old Manse is better than a thousand wigwams." Thus we see the romancer coming back to reality and bowing before it.

Hawthorne, because of his vivid and all-controlling imagination, readily clothed every object within sight with the mystic forms of romance. We find him discussing the orchard in this fashion: "An orchard has a relation to mankind, and readily connects itself with matters of the heart. The trees possess a domestic character; they have lost the wild nature of their forest kindred, and have grown humanized by receiving the care of man as well as by contributing to his wants. There is so much individuality of character, too, among apple trees that it gives them an additional claim to

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

be the objects of human interest. One is harsh and crabbed in its manifestations; another gives us fruit as mild as charity. One is churlish and illiberal, evidently grudging the few apples that it bears; another exhausts itself in free-hearted benevolence. The variety of grotesque shapes into which apple trees contort themselves has its effect on those who get acquainted with them; they stretch out their crooked branches and take hold of the imagination that we remember them as humorists and odd fellows. And what is more melancholy than the old apple tree that lingers about the spot where once stood a homestead, but where there is now only a ruined chimney rising out of the grassy and weed-grown cellar? They offer their fruit to every wayfarer—apples that are bitter-sweet with the moral of time's vicissitudes."

And again discussing his vegetable garden, he observes: "Childless men, if they would know something of the bliss of paternity, should plant a seed—be it squash, bean, Indian corn, or perhaps a mere flower or worthless weed—should plant it with their own hands and nurse it from infancy to maturity altogether by their own care. If there be not too many of them, each individual plant becomes an object of separate interest. My garden that skirted the avenue of The Manse was of precisely the right extent. An hour or two of morning labor was all that it required, but I used to visit and revisit it a dozen times a day, and stand in deep contemplation over my vegetable

WAYSIDE

progeny with a love that nobody could share or conceive of who has never taken part in the process of creation. It was one of the most bewitching sights in the world to observe a hill of beans thrusting aside the soil or a row of early peas just peeping forth sufficiently to trace a line of delicate green. Later in the season the hummingbirds were attracted by the blossoms of a peculiar variety of bean, and they were a joy to me—those little spiritual visitants—for deigning to sip any food out of my nectar cups. . . . But I was glad thus to fling a benefaction upon the passing breeze with the certainty that somebody must profit by it, and that there would be a little more honey in the world to allay the sourness and bitterness which mankind is always complaining of. Yes, indeed!" Anyone who has a garden could not but love Hawthorne after reading that extract which so admirably fits the experience of all of us. But even in these moments his Yankee shrewdness must crop out. His garden must be a garden of utilitarian value, and he turns off the subject of flowers as a remote possibility, almost, for those who would conduct the experiment which he prizes so much, "or perhaps a mere flower."

Hawthorne was a true genius. He lived so thoroughly within his own imagination that it is remarkable indeed that he ever translated the dreams it created for him to practical usage. It is indeed strange that he was not Thoreau and that Thoreau was not Hawthorne. Hawthorne shrank from contact with his fellows

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

almost as much as the wild naturalist of the Concord River. He was even less well known to his neighbors than he who lived in the woods near Walden Pond. He lived so much to himself, and was so well-guarded in his solitude by his wife, that we wonder in vain where he got the profound knowledge of life and the way it is lived to make his romances ring true. A philosopher can retire within himself and plumb the depths of human experience in every direction so long as he merely philosophizes, but the romancer and novelist must know life, or create through his genius such an illusion of knowing life that he not only deceives himself but his audience as well. Hawthorne had this genius, and the majority of his romances were laid in foreign countries which he had never visited or in a former time in localities with which he was familiar, so that as a novelist he successfully overcame his actual lack of knowledge of the life about him. He was philosopher enough to clothe his romances with precepts which rang true to every responsive ear.

His "Scarlet Letter" doubtless is his masterpiece. It carried a terrific indictment to the times. But it is interesting to note that Hawthorne personally valued his "House of the Seven Gables" higher. He wrote to his friend, Horatio Bridge, just after its publication: "The House of the Seven Gables,' in my opinion, is beyond 'The Scarlet Letter,' but I should not wonder if I have refined upon the principal character a little too much for proper appreciation, nor if the romance

WAYSIDE

of the book should be somewhat at odds with the humble and familiar scenery in which I invest it. But I feel that portions of it are as good as anything I can hope to write, and the publisher speaks encouragingly of its success."

However much Genius may pride itself upon its own work, it seldom, if ever, estimates it accurately. Regardless of what Hawthorne thought of "The House of the Seven Gables," the literary world doubtless will never admit that it was anything like such a consummate work of art as "The Scarlet Letter."

Wayside, the home of Hawthorne during the last few years of his life, is located on the famous old Lexington Road and at the edge of Concord village. Up the road, less than a block, is the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In the same direction and next door is the famous Orchard House of Louisa M. Alcott. Down the road toward Lexington, in the other direction, is Grape Vine Cottage where originated the famous Concord grape.

Wayside was for a time the home of the Alcotts, during the period when the Orchard House was being remodeled.) Here came Hawthorne after his wanderings in other localities and after his service as American Consul in Liverpool, England, to which office he was appointed by Franklin Pierce in 1853. President Pierce had been Hawthorne's college chum at Bowdoin College, in Maine. It is interesting to note that Longfellow was also a member of the same class, and did much to secure an early recognition for him.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Wayside is a large, rambling house of generous proportions. Hawthorne built the study on the roof, and there he spent much of his time. He seemed to seek elevation for the perspective so necessary to deep and successful concentration.

The house certainly reflects in its setting the outstanding traits of character of the great novelist. The woods and trees, the great hill rising abruptly at the rear of the house, covered with deep underbrush straggling over the rocks and granite, seemed to me to give it just the touch and setting so expressive of the man himself. He was a man of very deep moral sense, a man who could not write unless he produced a moral, a man who preached powerful sermons in his allegories, and yet a man of strange practicality and Yankee shrewdness. A dreamer who still felt that the house wrought by civilization was better than the savage wigwam, a man who loved nature with all the intensity and devotion of Thoreau and yet sought to keep nature in its place, whereas Thoreau would embrace it bodily. Thoreau would take the savage wigwam every time.

While living in Lenox, in his later years, Hawthorne wrote these lines to a friend: "In the afternoons, nowadays, this valley in which I dwell seems like a vast basin filled with golden sunshine, as with wine." At one time during his boyhood he lived for more than a year in the woods of Maine, his own sole companion. And for thirteen years, during his boyhood and young manhood, he lived practically alone and to himself in

WAYSIDE

his room in his mother's house at Salem. When later he revisited that room, he took out his notebook and wrote: "If ever I should have a biographer he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and here my mind and character were formed, and here I have been glad and hopeful and here I have been despondent. And here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently for the world to know me and sometimes wondering why it did not know me sooner, or whether it would ever know me at all—at least, till I were in my grave. . . . By and by the world found me out in my lonely chamber and called me forth." Thus we see the very great desire which creative Genius has for appreciation and recognition. No one, not even he who is solitary in his habits and who stands alone and apart from the world, can ever really be alone and apart from it and be happy. He must have recognition and in addition that welcome and that appreciation for which even Genius hungers.

We have come to look upon Genius as something apart from the rest of us, as something capable of going its own way and not subject to the doubts and delays, the fears and the fancies of the rest of us. But in this we do err. Genius is Genius because it is even more human than most of us are; it has an extra layer, as it were, of some human quality, and almost always, as it gains in its own direction, does it crave and hunger for the approbation of the "world," of someone, some-

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

where. The vapid reasons it sometimes gives, the apparent disdain it shows for the world, are only eloquent testimonials to its own inner longings. We live for approbation, at least most of us do, and have it we must or life itself would be but a lonely march through Death's desert.

CHAPTER XXII

WAYNESBOROUGH, THE HOME OF
"MAD ANTHONY" WAYNE

WAYNESBOROUGH

LISTEN to the shrill, screaming music of war! What a wild, thrilling thing it is, drawing in its siren way from shop and bench and farm the brave and determined; what black magic it portends, breaking asunder the cords of love, dividing the indivisible lovers, separating inseparable families, weaning men from life and luring them to the Red Death!

Listen to the grim, deep-throated roll of war! What a guttural, choking sob it is, concealing in its depths agonies dangerous to uncover; what misery and heaviness of heart lurk beneath the drone and the roar of its inarticulate moan, hinting of lives gone out, the wastage of bodies, the breakage of hearts—yet the firm will to storm on until its fierce appetite has been appeased!

Oh, the game of war! What a tempest it is, sweeping men to the charge like a storm of leaves, scorching and blighting and consuming myriads of them; hurling them back in defeat, clutching with them the phantoms of Fear and Despair, laying the heavy hand of Rout upon them, maddening them in the gore and stench of the slaughter—but tempering their wills in the mighty forge of Disaster and leading them on and up to the heights of Victory!

What a great, grand thing it is to be a man of war! A man who has swept all before him, felt the withering

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

blast in his face, reeled, been hurled back, clutched the remnant of hope with the energy of despair, held all by the force of his genius, wavered, and then spent it all in the last desperate effort for victory! A man to whom the shrill, screaming music is madness and delight itself; a man who has tasted defeat again and again, and yet snatched its standard in the hour of greatest peril, a man whom all the hosts of war could not down. To thee, Anthony Wayne, we bow!

On a day in August I went out from Philadelphia to Paoli, ancient seat of the Waynes. For twenty-odd miles the road curves and winds in and out among the eternal hills, through a never-ending succession of delightful panoramas. There is an Old-World quality in the landscape, and the forests, the fields, the hills, the stone—all speak the temper of a race that dared to do and die!

Paoli is but a little way from Valley Forge, just some five or six miles, where men who had braved the tempests of iron and lead all but lost under the heavy, terrible tribute of famine and cold. I had been to Valley Forge the day before, marveling at the magnitude of the place, the strength of it, and mentally congratulating General Howe for his rare wisdom in refusing to attack there. I had traced the outlines of breastworks still visible all over those heights and saw the grim cannon still frowning over some of the ramparts.

Two miles south of Paoli, through a winding forest

WAYNESBOROUGH

road, is Waynesborough, the birthplace and home of General Anthony Wayne. It is located in a peaceful vale, where tall corn waves in the August breeze and great patriarchs of trees still cool the heads of men. Built like a fortress of native boulders, this twenty-one-room manor house has stood like a citadel for two hundred years against the ravages of the elements. It is a place of peace, yet it has felt the sting of war and the tread of iron heels and the prod of bayonets held in the hands of Hessians.

It seemed indeed fitting that I should find a Wayne there, and Mr. William Wayne, great-great-great grandson of the General, graciously showed me about. I entered a typical colonial hallway extending through to the rear, and four rooms open off this hallway, two on either side. The first on the right is the reception parlor where Lafayette was received just one hundred years before my visit. All the furniture and hangings, with the exception of a small rug before the fireplace and the hangings at the windows, were in the room as originally furnished when the house was built two hundred years ago. The exceptions noted were placed there in honor of Lafayette's visit and have remained one hundred years.

In the dining-room I saw a wonderful buffet which occupied the place it does today when General Wayne was born upstairs one hundred eighty years ago. What an evidence of permanence and solidarity one sees on every hand! Here is one of the few old historic mansions

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

in the whole country which is still sheltering its human brood.

In the original kitchen, one of the first rooms built by young Captain Wayne when he first came to Paoli, but used by General Wayne as an office and since continued, I found the largest fireplace I have ever seen. It seemed a great yawning cavern capable of taking whole trees intact. Mr. William Wayne remarked that the best thing about it was that it had a perfect draft, and was the only fireplace of such proportions that he had ever seen that did draw perfectly. It took but little imagination to conjure up pictures of the scenes which this great heart of the colonial home had witnessed.

Out in the lawn, to the rear, Mr. Wayne showed me an ancient clump of boxwood which has an interesting history. On the memorable night following the battle of Paoli, when General Wayne was routed and his army dispersed, the Hessians came to Waynesborough, thinking the General would seek refuge there. They made a thorough search of the house, and, failing to find him hidden there, decided that he must be in this boxwood clump. So they poked all through it with their bayonets in the dark until satisfied that the wary warrior was not there!

The rear lawn is magnificent and strongly reminded me of the beauty of the rear lawn at The Hermitage, the home of Jackson. Such graceful beauty, such trees and shrubs, such grass and shade! The place has been



PLATE XXII. Waynesborough, home of General Anthony Wayne.

WAYNESBOROUGH

two hundred years in the making, and it is now near perfection.

When one looks on a rugged house like Waynesborough, admiration is bound to be aroused for the builders and artisans of a day gone, when men lived to build houses that would endure. These walls were built from stone picked up out of the fields. They were carefully selected and built into thick and substantial walls which will endure indefinitely. The walls at Waynesborough are as good today as they were two hundred years ago, and, strange as it may seem, give little hint of age. The house might well be taken for one recently built, so well preserved is it.

Here on this farm was born the handsome, virile man who came to be such a terror to his foes. He spent his boyhood here, with the exception of his schooling days in neighboring Philadelphia. He became a surveyor and at twenty was sent to Nova Scotia to locate some land-grants there for wealthy gentlemen in the neighborhood. Returning, just as the struggle with the mother country was coming to a head, he turned his practical mind to the business of raising a regiment and drilling it. He left to politicians the business of splitting hairs over legal constructions; he allowed them to argue the fine points while he went to work getting ready for the struggle he foresaw.

To this farm he returned, in the midst of that dark hour when all seemed lost, and even Washington was casting his eyes in the direction of the Alleghany

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Mountains as a refuge for his tattered army. Here on the edge of this farm, General Wayne tasted the first cup of defeat, his army scattered and destroyed at the "Massacre of Paoli"; here he returned, rich in fame and honor, when the long struggle was won, but impoverished and ruined in finances; here he lived when Washington summoned him to crush the Indians on the banks of the Miami; and here his ashes were brought at the close of his campaign as commissioner with the Northwest Indians at Detroit, following his untimely death.

"Mad Anthony" Wayne was thirty years of age when the Revolutionary War broke out. We have already mentioned the fact that he had anticipated this event and had trained a regiment for service. He was commissioned colonel and was soon in the thick of events. He was immediately attached to the northern army, then invading Canada, and served through that campaign. At Trois Rivières, in spite of the fact that the attack was miserably planned and conducted, he won his first laurels. General Thompson, in command, was captured and General St. Clair, second in command, had injured his foot by running a root through it, so it fell to Wayne, also dangerously wounded, to conduct the retreat which he did with great skill.

He fell back to Ticonderoga and was there when Benedict Arnold fought his famous naval engagement on Champlain. Soon he found himself in command and became a brigadier-general. The next spring,

WAYNESBOROUGH

however, he requested to be joined to the main army because he realized that the real struggle was to be waged around Washington and he wanted to be in the thick of the fight. His request was granted and Washington placed him over a brigade.

At Brandywine, that disastrous battle for the Continentals, Wayne was in command of the center at Chad's Ford and would have had all the action his fiery nature craved if the battle had been fought along the lines anticipated. But Howe elected to take a daring chance and marched the bulk of his army on a sixteen-mile flanking movement, surprising Armstrong, on Wayne's right, flanking him and throwing the whole army back on Chester in confusion and flight. Wayne commanded the rear-guard action of necessity that day, and saved the army.

From that hour until the following summer at Monmouth, the cause of the Continentals seemed doomed. One disaster crowded close on the heels of another—Brandywine was lost, Philadelphia fell, and Congress scattered, and then, near Paoli came the defeat of Wayne and the rout of his army just when victory seemed within grasp.

There will always be a division of opinion as to how it happened. It seems to all reasonable men who examine the story that the attack by the Hessians was a surprise and fearfully successful. Wayne had been ordered by Washington to hang on Howe's rear and destroy his stores. He had taken up his position about

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

nightfall and was awaiting reinforcements, content in the knowledge that on the morrow he would deal Howe a real blow. In the meantime, Howe's spies informed him of Wayne's position, and it was so dangerous that Howe decided to make a night attack in an effort to dislodge him.

Wayne redoubled his pickets and ordered the men to sleep on their arms. During the night the Hessians came on, overpowered the pickets, and making only a bayonet attack had swept into camp before the alarm was given. Wayne attempted to rally his men, issued an order three times to an inferior officer before it was carried out—all was confusion, terror, rout. And Wayne himself escaped only by a scratch. This seeming laxness of vigilance dealt a telling blow to his reputation, and he continued to smart under it until his chance came months later at Stony Point.

He spent the winter in New Jersey, playing hide and seek with the British and in raising stores and provisions for Washington's army at Valley Forge. He took part in the battle of Germantown where, in spite of well-laid plans and a perfect execution, victory was snatched from his grasp and his men broke and fled. But again the great Washington refused to pass judgment upon him, knowing that in the fiery impetuosity of this young soldier, and the paradoxical calmness he exhibited in the hour of surprise, great achievements lurked.

Again Wayne was in command of the center, and he

WAYNESBOROUGH

swept all before him with the bayonet, refusing to fire a shot. But the British rallied and poured volley after volley into his men, Wayne carrying them on to charge after charge. He always rode at the head of his column—he was struck in the foot, another ball grazed his hand, his horse was shot beneath him, and he sprang to his feet, leading his men personally. But in the fog, the men became separated, confusion grew, and victory faded away. Given one hour of sunlight then, Washington would have driven Cornwallis into the river!

At Monmouth “Mad Anthony” again proved his right to the peculiar title which history has assigned him. He was a very torrent, pouring like a blast upon his foes, gaining when Lee was retreating, holding the full shock of battle, stubbornly refusing to yield an inch, and finally driving all before him. Here he again was under Washington’s eye and gained that general’s undying gratitude when he sternly refused to sign the order of the council of war against giving battle. At Lee’s retreat, like Washington, he was thrown into a perfect torrent of rage. His soldiers who followed him that day never forgot the fury with which he plunged into the conflict.

In planning the attack on Stony Point, on the Hudson, Wayne revealed his character when he impetuously remarked to Washington, “General, if *you* will only plan it, I will storm hell!” The story of this great attack is known to every schoolboy. How, with

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

every charge drawn from the muskets, every man warned that the first to remove musket from shoulder, the first to speak, the first to break would be instantly killed by the nearest officer—with only the bayonet to depend upon, a leaping torrent of fire and shell to brave *before* they could be used, the white paper in hats to tell friend from foe, the desperate chances, the wonderful victory—all is common knowledge.

Twenty men were sent forward to cut their way through the debris so the infantry could advance. These all fell, save three, in that awful carnage, but a way was opened. Half way up the height Wayne was struck in the head and apparently mortally wounded, but out of that roar and noise of battle, his voice was heard above the tumult sternly demanding to be carried at the head of his troops. He lifted himself on one knee, and shouted, "*March on! Carry me into the fort, for I will die at the head of my column!*" And this quick and stern presence of mind doubtless saved the day and won the prize his proud heart so grimly demanded. It is well to keep in mind that Wayne's chance to vindicate himself had come and failure here would only lend color to the attacks previously made upon his military ability.

His wound proved to be only a scratch of the skull, and he lived to enjoy the full success of this exploit and many others. General Lee, whom he had scorned so much at Monmouth, wrote him: "I do most sincerely declare that your assault of Stony Point is not

WAYNESBOROUGH

only the most brilliant, in my opinion, throughout the whole course of the war on either side, but that it is the most brilliant I am acquainted with in history. . .” Everywhere his name was acclaimed. His exploit proved that so long as men struggle for mastery there is no such thing as an inability to “come back.” “Mad Anthony” Wayne did come back again and again!

His campaign in the South was none the less brilliant. In Virginia, with eleven hundred men, he suddenly found himself face to face with the whole of Cornwallis’ army. Wayne had understood that only the rearguard lay before him. He drove in the pickets and then found Cornwallis with his whole army drawn up in battle array. Wayne’s quick presence of mind saved him. Cornwallis’ flanking parties were closing in; to retreat might mean the loss of his whole corps. So, without flinching, he promptly ordered a charge. Cornwallis wavered, surprised at these tactics, then concluded that he must be misinformed, hastily called in his flanking parties, fearing the whole American army was on him. Wayne then calmly retreated but his ruse cost him one hundred and fifty men.

In Georgia he freed the whole state, with the exception of Savannah, of the enemy and was making it so hot for the British there that they called on their Indian allies, the Choctaws and the Creeks, for help. Wayne waylaid and destroyed one party, but the other was too wary. They slipped up on him one night and almost repeated the terrible story of Paoli. He was

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

surprised, but this time he snatched victory out of the very jaws of defeat. He fought on foot and personally cut down the Indian chief with his sword.

Again Wayne exhibited his wonderful presence of mind in the midst of the greatest danger. The attack of the Indians suggested to him that it was probably a signal for the British to attack, too. He promptly dispatched a regiment to attack the British, in the midst of the fight with the Indians, reasoning that this attack would be construed by the British to mean that he had defeated the Indians! The plan proved successful, and a short time after Savannah was evacuated. Thus, in five weeks, with only a few men, he freed the entire state.

After Yorktown, he returned to his farm and lost all his land grants in an effort to save his home. He remained there until 1793 when Washington appointed him commander-in-chief of the army, with orders to proceed against the Indians on the western frontier. Two expeditions against them had ended in disaster. St. Clair had been ambushed and his army destroyed, and Washington's memorable fit of temper when he heard of it indicated the extreme anxiety of the situation.

As a sidelight on patriotism, when there is a chance to profit at the expense of the general government, it was necessary for Wayne to offer six dollars per day wages and a land grant to each man before he could recruit an army. But he did succeed in overcoming all

WAYNESBOROUGH

obstacles and in routing the savages at the point of his favorite bayonet, jumping them out of their cover with it and pouring a murderous fire into their backs. Never again did the Indians in the Ohio country cause trouble.

Wayne returned east and his fame was even greater than after Stony Point. He was everywhere looked upon as the savior of the nation. Great fêtes were accorded him, and his entry into Philadelphia was one of the most memorable events ever staged in that city. Greater significance attached to it because it was then the seat of the national government.

He died within a year, while on his way home from Detroit where he had negotiated with the Indians. While on Lake Erie a fit of gout seized him, and he never recovered, dying shortly after. He is buried at Waynesborough.

“Mad Anthony” is deservedly one of our great heroes. His career reads like some storied romance of medieval times. He is our true dashing, valorous warrior—a fighting man first, last, and always. He had something of the eagle’s heart in his proud figure.

Strange as it may seem, his nickname was applied to him by accident. It chanced that a half-witted fellow who hung around his camp used to pass him in a wide circle every time they met, muttering to himself and shaking his head: “Mad Anthony! Mad Anthony!” The term fitted him so well that his men took it up and it stuck. He was, indeed, a veritable madman in the midst of battle, a human thunderbolt.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

The wild, stirring music of war was to him life; he loved the roar of it, the grim chance of it, the glory and fame of it, for deeds nobly won. He was a great soldier and we honor him for it (mark my words) because he belonged to that vanished race of soldiers who *led* their men to battle, who fought shoulder to shoulder with them in the thickest of the fray! As we evolve a race of soldiers who *send* their men out to carnage under subalterns and make of war a scientific holocaust, then does the romance and the glamor of it fade into nothingness. The glory of war belongs to another day, and its great heroes are of a race that does not reproduce.

■

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

■

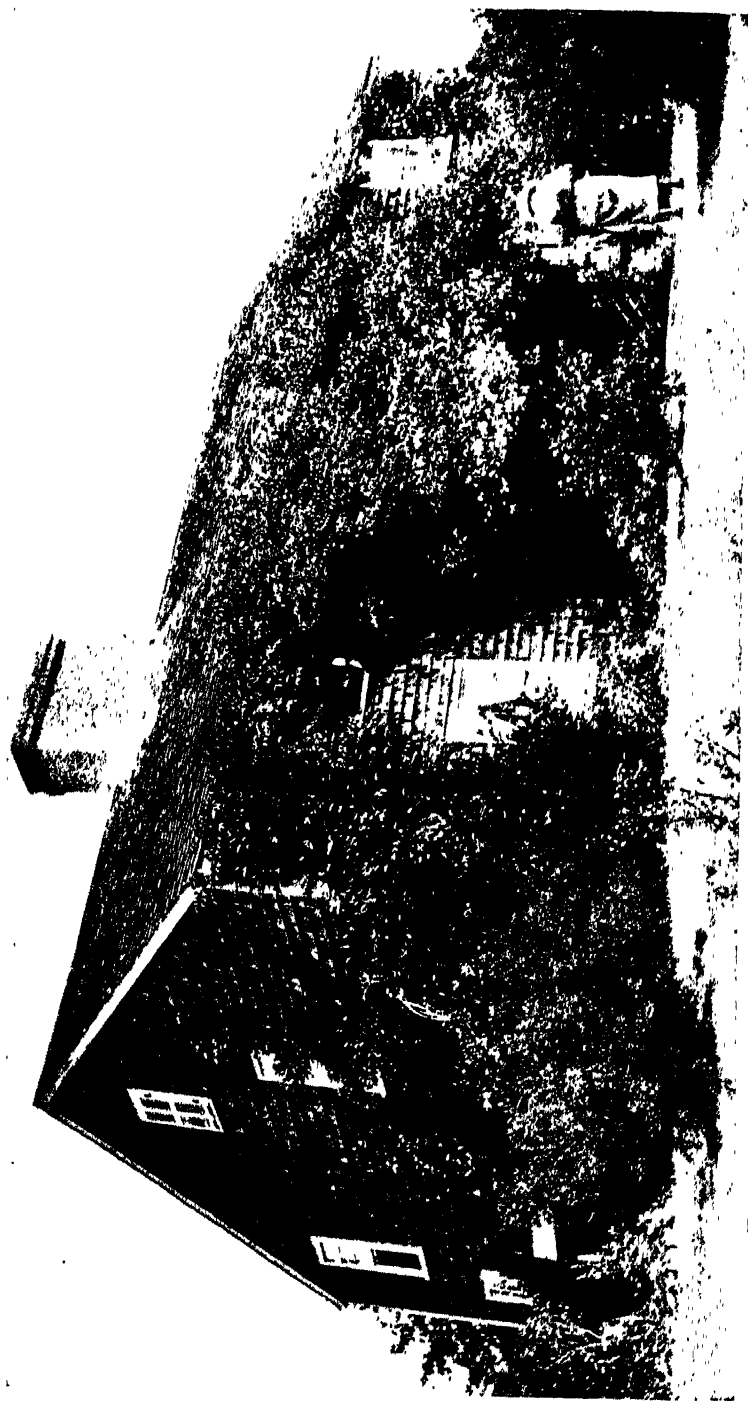


PLATE XXIII. The home of John and Priscilla Alden at Duxbury, Massachusetts.

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

ONE cannot go to Plymouth without a feeling of mingled excitement and surprise. No matter how well you have read your Pilgrim lore, or how well you are prepared to visualize it as it was in that memorable winter of 1620-21, I am sure that those hills of sand, gravel, and rock, that stern and cheerless coast-line, bring into sharper focus the Patuxet (Plymouth) they found then.

When we recall that it was the Christmas season; that most of the Pilgrims were suffering from colds and coughs incurred through their exposure two or three weeks before at Cape Cod; that their selection of this spot was really a race with famine; that it was really the sepulchre of an Indian tribe lately destroyed by a plague; that scurvy had just broken out among them; that William Bradford's wife had just been drowned through an accident; that tempestuous storms, even in this sheltered harbor, had prevented them from landing for four or five days—these facts kept in mind aid one in visualizing the event as it really was. It is a cheerless picture to contemplate, to say the least.

Cole's Hill rises abruptly above the marble canopy which now shelters Plymouth Rock. I stood there a long time, looking out to sea, seeing the 180-ton Mayflower riding at anchor. A hundred passages I had read in the manuscripts of Governor Bradford and Edward

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Winslow came to mind. Just to the right a few hundred feet is the Town Brook along which the first cabins were located, and across the brook, nestled at the foot of the present Burial Hill, was the first community center, and on top of the high hill, the first fort and meeting-house. This hill where I stood was the first burial-ground of the Pilgrims. I recalled how at first a grave had to be dug every other day out of the frozen ground, and, finally, on some days, two and three. There came a time when there were hardly enough to dig the graves or minister unto the sick and dying.

I saw their anxiety in the face of this grief for fear their losses should be discovered by the savages—a greater menace hovering ever around them on the fringes of the forest—and how Squanto taught them to level off the graves in the snow and then plant corn over them in the spring to hide them from the prying eyes of unfriendly warriors.

Forty-seven of that little Pilgrim band, nearly one-half of the total number, died the first ninety days after the landing—swept away like chaff before the winter wind! But in spite of this adversity, in spite of the low food-supply, in spite of the burning of cabins just completed after heart-rending labor, in spite of the continuous rains and storms, in spite of the fear of the savages—their high resolution held and they stood fast!

At length, their fort was completed and their ordnance, several cannon having sufficient range to

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

command the Bay and vicinity, were put in place. Then they breathed a little easier. Hardly had this been done before two or three savages appeared on the crest of Watson's Hill, but when Captain Standish tried to parley with them, they fled for fear.

I thought, too, of the coming of Samoset and Massasoit, of the help of Squanto in fishing and in planting Indian corn, of the treachery of Tisquantum which all but wiped out the settlement. I recalled the story of how the second summer, the summer of the long drouth, all but destroyed their precious corn crop, and I do not wonder that Winslow returned such fervent thanks to God for the providential rain which saved them from ruin. This rain, by the way, came in the evening of the day set aside for public prayer and fasting and it lasted for upwards of two weeks—such a gentle downpour that their parched and withered corn revived and matured a good crop. This made a profound impression upon the savages, who reported that when they prayed for rain they generally got such a hurricane that it flattened their corn on the ground and ruined it, if their prayer was answered at all.

The Pilgrim story, if you go back to first sources and get it as it was chronicled day by day by those who lived it and saw it, is distinctly a human story. It reflects much of human nature and contributes a great deal to the theory that human experience is much the same in all times and climes.

There was nothing of the romantic in their daily life

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

to them. It was a grim and determined struggle for mere existence, a struggle waged by a handful of determined men and women against the combined forces of the wilderness and human disease. We are the ones who have put in the highlights, "touched up" the picture here and there, and, upon my soul, I believe we have distorted it. We have the itch to do this to every great historical event, and sometimes we overshoot the mark and make the whole affair ridiculous.

Take the story of the landing as an instance: One would sometimes think that it was a sort of over-extended picnic; that there was great rivalry to see who should set foot first upon Plymouth Rock, and that the rest of the early days were consumed in a friendly contest between John Alden and Captain Standish for the hand of the sprightly Priscilla.

But what are the facts? The Pilgrims' shallop, or small boat, had been fitted out and had been making explorations all along the coast from Cape Cod for two to three weeks. It is specifically set out in "A Relation, or Journal, of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation settled at Plymouth, in New England," published in London in 1622, that this shallop was manned by "twenty-four armed men and four or five sailors." This shallop had led the Mayflower to Plymouth harbor and had made two or three explorations up and down the harbor before it was determined on Wednesday, December 20, to "take a better view of two places which we thought more

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

fitting for us. . . . After our landing, and viewing of the places as well as we could; we came to a conclusion by most voices to set on the mainland, on the first place, on a high ground where there is a great deal of land cleared. . . .”

The shallop, then, made the *first* landing and it was made up entirely of armed men and sailors. This would seem to be at loggerheads with the claims of Mary Chilton, and even of John Alden, not a fighting man but a hired man, and, at first, not a real member of the Pilgrim faith.

But, to continue: “So there we made our randevous, and a place for some of our people, about twenty; resolving in the morning, to come all ashore, and to build houses.” On the 21st and 22d, however, it stormed so severely that those on board could not come off, and those on shore could not go aboard. On the 23d only a few men could get off, and they spent the day felling trees. It was not until the 25th that any considerable number got ashore, and they apparently were all *men*.

We do not know who first set foot on Plymouth Rock, or whether that granite boulder was even *the spot*; there is not a word of it in the authentic records left behind. I find no mention of the other common romantic episodes with which tradition has surrounded the Pilgrims, such as the myth about Priscilla’s classic remark to John, or the sore heart of the stern and doughty Myles.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

We have even put a false halo over the heads of the American Indian, which the Pilgrim manuscript punctures in a matter-of-fact way. When Massasoit came for the parley and signed the treaty of peace, the Pilgrims apparently got him drunk first; at least, he was reduced to that happy and care-free condition which often prompts even more civilized men to want to buy and sell everything in sight. Says the manuscript: "After salutations, our Governor kissing his hand, the King (Massasoit) kissed him; and so they sat down. The Governor called for some *strong water*, and drank to him; and he (Massasoit) drank a great draught that made him sweat all the while after."

In June, Edward Winslow and another went to visit Massasoit and they "fell to discoursing of England and of the King's Majesty marvelling that he would live without a wife" (Queen Anne had died the year before). Then, in time, they went to bed. "He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife; they at one end, and we at the other; it being only planks laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men, for want of room pressed by and upon us; so that we were more weary for our lodging, than of our journey." They stayed for two days with nothing to eat being offered, because Massasoit had nothing, and finally determined to hurry home before their strength gave out. ". . . we feared we should be lightheaded for want of sleep. For what with bad lodging; the savages' barbarous singing, for they used to sing

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

themselves asleep; lice and fleas within doors; and muskeetoos [mosquitoes] without; we could hardly sleep all the time of our being there. We much feared that if we should stay any longer, we should not be able to recover home for want of strength."

In Duxbury, at the north end of Plymouth Bay, some seven miles from the town, is the John Alden house. It was built in 1653, and here John Alden lived the last thirteen years of his life prior to his death in 1687. John Alden had two cabins at Plymouth which were burned over his head, and then he came to Duxbury where he built a cabin in a little cove of the harbor, about a quarter of a mile from the present house. This cabin was in time destroyed also, and he and Priscilla came in their old age to live in the house which is the subject of this sketch, and which had been commenced by their oldest son.

It is a large and commodious house, not unlike thousands of New England farmhouses, of typical colonial construction, but two things struck me about it: the first is the shingles on the outside which have withstood the elements for a long, long time. I do not know that they were originally there, as it is possible that the house was then of the usual log structure, but in time the refinements came and the shingles were added. The other point was the old kitchen, where one finds really more atmosphere of those far-off days.

In this kitchen, the fireplace was recently dug out, that is, the later fireplaces which had been built into

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

the larger and older one, were removed and the original discovered. Many interesting things were revealed there. Among them was an old oven built of stone and brick to the rear of the fireplace where the baking was done in great pans.

On a table in one corner of this kitchen are placed a complete set of the wooden dishes from which the Pilgrims were forced to eat during their early years. These dishes are handmade from native wood and are very crude and rough. They bring one face to face with the grim reality of their lives.

Over the mantel hangs a cross-bow and arrow which some good Englishman used in his warfare. When the fireplace was dug out, a complete Indian arrow was found on a ledge where it had fallen and reposed these two-hundred-fifty-odd years. It is supposed that John Alden, or some of his boys, being out hunting, found it and carried it in and laid it on the shelf.

Just adjoining the kitchen is the little bedroom where John Alden died, and we are shown the very bed, according to tradition. John Alden, it will be recalled, was the youngest man in the Mayflower company, and he lived to be over eighty years of age, being one of the last survivors.

There is little of especial interest in the other rooms. We see on the doors and cupboards the typical H and L, arrow, and hatchet hinges. The beams and all the timbers were, of course, hand-hewn. The floors are great wide planks, likewise hand-made.

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

It all betokens strength and security, and a sense of achievement pervades the very atmosphere. One cannot help but feel that the Pilgrim roots had gone down deep into this soil when a place like this could be built. Its very situation, seven miles from the Old Fort, indicates that the menace of the wilderness had long since been removed, and the straggling hint of an orchard at the door indicates that the threat of famine had been pushed aside.

The romance of John and Priscilla is one of the high spots in all that grim story. No doubt much coloring has been added by the romancer and the poet, but that makes it none the less fine. Their love-making only goes to prove that, whatever the trial or however uncertain the day's life may be, human hearts will not renounce their instinctive impulse for expression. Love will not be denied. It flourishes and struggles for fruition even among death and desolation.

I have searched in vain for some authentic record of the incidents in their courtship, as unfolded by the poet. They were not found. True it is that Captain Standish's wife perished that first terrible winter, and that two or three seasons later Priscilla married John. Whether she ever made her historic reply to John we do not know.

But it is just as well. Her fabled reply has caught our imagination because it was deeply prophetic of the new estate to which woman was to come in this country, and it was not out of place for Priscilla, for that matter.

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

She was then alone in the world, her parents having perished, and maid never lived who bargained where her heart went not also.

Captain Standish soon married another and lived happily to his old age. That he nursed a sore heart does not seem to be the case, for he moved to Duxbury, close by the Aldens, and there he died. Indeed, one of his sons married one of Priscilla's daughters, and it was this daughter-in-law beside whom he willed to be buried.

In Pilgrim Hall, at Plymouth, one may look upon many paintings characteristic of scenes in their daily life. I stood for a long time looking at one which seemed more expressive of the courage and faith of the Pilgrims than anything else. It is familiar to everyone. It is the painting entitled, "The Departure of the Mayflower."

A few Pilgrims stand along the shore in little groups of twos and threes. The Mayflower stands out at sea. The sky is leaden, dull, melancholy. There seems to be even on the face of Nature uncertainty, grim foreboding, doubt. The men and women gaze out after the ship, their expressions determined, yet anxious; troubled yet hopeful. How calm their faces, yet how torn with longing and homesickness their hearts! Everyone struggling with the overwhelming desire to go back to friends and civilization, yet remaining behind upon this gray and sullen coast to maintain a principle even at the cost of life! It is so easy to surrender a principle in the face of overwhelming odds.

THE HOME OF JOHN ALDEN

Sometimes we are apt to belittle ideals and look askance upon those who assert them, but we should not forget that America's heritage is that from the very beginnings, when the first little fringes of population touched her shores, the highest type of national ideals was implanted into our consciousness. Thanksgiving Day was established as a day of thankfulness and prayer to the Creator for the preservation of those ideals—not for gloating over material prosperity!

It is well to keep in mind these days that they endured all these hardships and these unnamed terrors to escape the tyranny of a persecution for their religious beliefs. And the honor we do them and the luster we have placed around their story is due to the fact that it was, and is, the really typical American expression on the subject.

It is unthinkable that these ideals should ever be compromised or surrendered on this continent, and that we should long continue to exist with any sort of hopefulness or pride for the future. It has taken blood without stint and sacrifice and denial without limit, from the beginning of recorded history, to bring even the recognition of this right to mankind. Then a band of men and women of the highest moral purpose had to leave the encumbered and fettered civilization of the world behind and go to an untamed and unknown wilderness really to set it up and give it expression.

We have been the beneficiaries of their sacrifice and their contribution to a better world order. That it shall

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

ever have been in vain is as unthinkable as that our political liberty should lapse back into the dark night of despotism and despair.

The glory of Thanksgiving Day is that these men and women stood fast, even in the face of death. This is the message of the picture mentioned above, the message of a visit to Plymouth, the message of a visit to the home of John Alden, the message of Thanksgiving Day!

CHAPTER XXIV
“HOME, SWEET HOME”

“HOME, SWEET HOME”

I HAVE a test which I like to apply now and then just to prove that all men, certainly all those who understand the English language, are much the same, regardless of who they are. They react to the same emotions; hate the same hates; fear the same fears; love the same loves. And that test is simply this: Have played or sung for them “Home, Sweet Home.” That, and nothing more.

I have seen it done in the midst of the greatest frivolity—the quick hush that fell upon the assembled throng, the sudden knitting of the brows, the tell-tale trace of Memory’s call in their moistened eyes. I have seen it sober school children in the midst of their wild, boisterous play; I have seen how, at dances when the orchestra strikes up the mellow refrain, partners have been drawn just a little closer together and have danced better and with more enjoyment than ever before. They commonly linger longest at this waltz. I have seen how, at the theaters, when it seems necessary to put across the real heart appeal, that this air is most commonly used.

Needless to say, when all men without reference to their station in life, can be so quickly reduced to a common level through a play upon a fundamental emotion—we have paid the greatest possible compliment to creative genius. We all instinctively know that

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

John Howard Payne touched bed-rock when he wrote this great song. The power of his genius lingers with us after one hundred years.

It is no secret, this power which Payne displayed, but so few who imagine they have the creative impulse ever reveal any acquaintance with it! The "secret" is this: Take your theme from the commonplace in man's experience, pitch it in tune with the greatest number, then be sure your technique of expression is correct. The world may not embrace you, or crown you with a laurel wreath as it did Petrarch. Indeed, it may deny you the very necessities of life, but if you work over it, suffer for it hard enough, some day it may discover you. If you aim your darts at the heart of humanity, the chances are good that one hundred years after you have passed on talk will be heard about placing your bust in the hall of fame. If not, why then you have failed!

There is a beautiful legend told us as to how Payne came to write "Home, Sweet Home." It may be true and it may not. I seem to see here some of the handiwork of those meddlers who ever insist upon throwing a halo of romance around the lives and works of those who come into the limelight.

It was Christmas Eve in London Town (some say Paris) in the year of Our Lord, eighteen hundred twenty-three, that John Howard Payne, a wandering American actor and playwright, after some years of lonely exile, found his thoughts turning toward home.

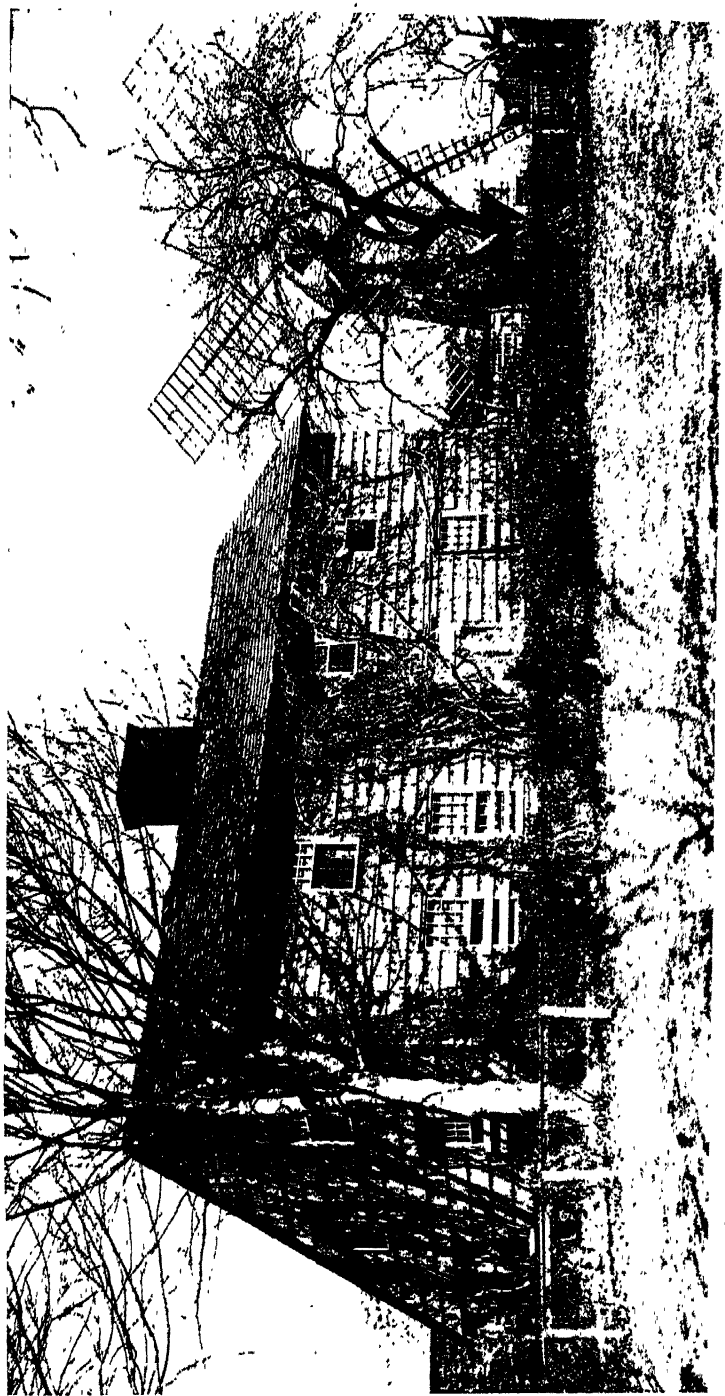


PLATE XXIV. "Home, Sweet Home," the boyhood home of John Howard Payne,
at East Hampton, Long Island.

“HOME, SWEET HOME”

The only domicile he had then was the proverbial poet's garret, for he was not then acclaimed by any considerable portion of the world. Indeed, it is questionable whether any, outside of a few actors and theater-goers, were acquainted with his slim and melancholy figure. Oh, yes, his landlady knew him, probably better than the others!

Christmas Eve! If Payne had deliberately searched through the whole year for a propitious time to write “Home, Sweet Home” he could have selected none better. It is then that the heart lies nearest to the old nest; then, if ever, come the memories which tug and pull and wrench the very heart back to those other times and those other scenes when cares were unknown and responsibilities rested light as a feather upon us. Then our lips had not come to be a thin, straight line of brutal flesh, and the dead level of earnestness did not lurk in our smould'ring eyes. The Christmas season brings more of us up with a jerk than anything else that crosses our paths. It is the suicide season of the year, for more suicides are recorded on the front page on Christmas morning than on any other morning of the year; it stands at the end of the sweep of the emotional pendulum, and many lose their hold and slip off. . . .

It is said that Payne found himself so tortured by homesickness that he fled from his garret and pushed out into the chilly London fog—there is always a fog in London—and tramped for hours, wrapped in memories of that old home at East Hampton, in Long

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

Island, where as a boy he had known love and sympathy and security.

Then, and it is here that I detect the fingerprints of the interpolator, he saw a happy father pushing his way through the throng, his arms laden with Christmas packages. Payne followed him, saw him push open the door of his house, caught a glimpse of light and cheerfulness within—the flash of a Christmas tree laden with its baubles and sparklers; a happy, eager child rushing with outstretched arms and laughing eyes to meet its Daddy—then the door shut him out again.

We can well imagine how it all but caused his undoing; how he wrapped his thin cloak about him and stumbled back to the garret, numbed in mind and weak from his innermost tortures. He could not go back had he the means; it would not be back to his old, old home, for it had long since passed to other hands when his father failed and lost everything.

And, then, in the night—oh, blessed night, which soothes and sustains those who are weary and grief-torn! In the night, when his mind had cleared, it was inevitable that he should seek comfort in labor, in the only labor he knew. And so “Home, Sweet Home” leaped out of his heart and onto his page of foolscap. It was the refrain which the most terrible emotion known to man, homesickness, produced in his own heart. And it lives and speaks to us today because the wandering minstrel who set it to paper had lived it himself. I do not wonder that strong men weep when

“HOME, SWEET HOME”

it is played, that it commonly so touched Roosevelt, for instance. It speaks the saddest refrain that human hearts can know, for it reveals the misery which overtakes those who lose the greatest influence this life has.

Payne was born in New York City in 1791, but he spent his early boyhood at East Hampton, out toward the eastern tip of Long Island. It will be recalled by those who have not forgotten their geography, that Long Island is shaped like a whale, with the divided tail out in the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the head run in close to Manhattan Island. East Hampton is on the lower edge of the divided tail and three hours' journey by train from New York City.

I made the pilgrimage in March. The rose-buds were just beginning to swell a bit and the giant wisteria vine over the front door at “Home, Sweet Home” was showing the first stirrings of another resurrection.

One cannot walk down this broad avenue of ancient homes, secure in the bosom of the generous lawns and protected by great elm trees, without sensing at once the great appeal which its very contrast must have had upon the lonely poet. I found here more of that quality we call “atmosphere” than I have ever found elsewhere, and as I saw the old house, stood before the door, or mused in the little vegetable garden in the rear, I said: “I do not wonder now; I understand why he turned to this place in his longing!”

For upward of two hundred fifty years the old house has stood and sheltered its human brood, in sunshine

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

and in sorrow, in good times and in bad. The scars of life are deep upon it, but it has stood fast and serene. The moss upon the ancient shingles, the quiet grandeur of it, the giant vines over the doors—these bespeak a home where the roots have gone down a long, long way.

In the back yard there is an ancient windmill, such as one might find on the moors of Holland. Formerly, it was located at the end of a pasture some blocks away, but I could see the youthful Payne, barefooted and tousled headed, sneaking down the barn-lot and to the windmill, to stand and watch it open-mouthed as its giant fingers circled the sky.

No doubt he was made to weed the garden-patch at times when the gang was down at the swimmin'-hole, or eagerly setting about the business of making beanie shooters, or mysteriously fishing for minnows with pin-hooks. And, then, there were hours when the heat slowed down even boyish ambition, and he was content just to lie on a bench under the great grape-vine at the back door, speculating on the probability of success if he attempted to raid mother's cookie-jar.

A child! Oh, let us be frank and admit it! There is a celestial glory about childhood days. Wild and free and glorious are these days of sweet innocence. Days when men and women are budding in the great field of life, untried, unwhipped! Strong and anxious are they then, as impatient as a racer; born and bred in the bone is the wild desire to see the world, to run the race, to taste, to touch, to try.

“HOME, SWEET HOME”

There are thoughts of an anxious mother, thoughtfully and painstakingly watching with the inspired eyes of love their every action, warding off disaster and temptation; preserving them until the morrow, giving them sweet sleep, if but for tonight!

And when they have run their race and played their game and drunk the last dregs from the cup they have snatched from life, they want to be children again, “just for tonight.” Even as you and I.

All of this lurks back of Payne’s great song. It came out in such sharp relief because, being detached forever from such ties, he knew them the more for their real value.

He early displayed a natural bent for expression. At fourteen he was editing and publishing a little paper which he called “The Thespian Mirror,” which likewise revealed his growing interest in the theater and things of the theater. He attended Union College for two years, all the time turning more and more to the theater. Men gravitate to the work they are best qualified to do.

His father’s bankruptcy compelled him to leave school, and he hurried to New York and hung around the theaters until he got a part and made his debut at Park Theater, where he scored instant success. No doubt he longed to be a tragedian, for he had the tragic air young actors so commonly affected in the last century.

Soon he went to London to seek his fame, much as

HOMES OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

young artists now flock to New York City. There was the wealth, the culture, the appreciation. There was the great bright light, and, like so many moths, they flocked to its beck and call.

He went to England in 1813 and he remained there until 1832, having gradually established himself as an actor, playwright, and manager. Payne had been in London, then, just ten years when he is supposed to have written "Home, Sweet Home," which he first published in his opera "Clari," or "The Maid of Milan." It was first sung at the Covent Garden Theater by Miss M. Tree.

I can imagine the tremendous effect it had that first night when it fell upon the startled audience, for we know now how men react to it, even though it is familiar to all. The hush, the furtive tear, the huskiness, then the breathless silence. At last, it is done, and the pretty little singer pauses an instant, smiles and bows her exit. Then, the mighty roar of applause which swept it quickly to the four corners of the English-speaking world.

Nine years later Payne went back to America, trying his hand at various enterprises, contributing an occasional piece to the newspapers and periodicals. Like Poe, he was illy used and never appreciated in his lifetime. If there be any who feel that success is easy, let them call to mind the lives of Stephen Foster, Edgar Allen Poe, and John Howard Payne—the Sad Trio, Foster and Poe burying their suffering in the

“HOME, SWEET HOME”

wine-glass, and Payne creeping off to Tunis in his old age!

“Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home,” sang Payne. Those of us who have not really lived do not know what it means. Sometimes we have to lose a very great possession before we recognize its true worth; indeed, sometimes we come to the very brink of the grave before we realize what we have really owed to the life which has gone on.

In the end, hurry and scurry as we may through the highways and byways of life for its fancied treasures, we come to know that nothing is so vital and so worthwhile as the home, just home. Home in all that it implies; the loved ones it shelters; the trace of lives it has nourished; the bit of happiness, the rest and comfort it has given us.

Home is everything! It reaches the tentacles down into our hearts whether we know it or not, and it brings us to the high and true purpose of real living. It is only when we have wrenched free and have uprooted its influence forever, that we know this. For to make a home, and to nourish lives there, is the highest attribute of civilization, and, indeed, of life itself.

